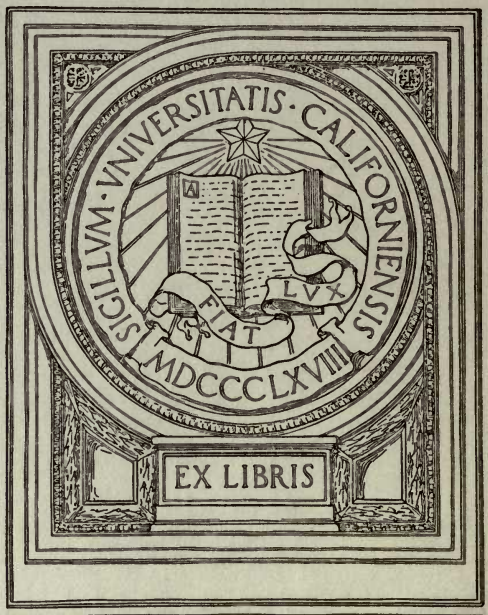

The end of the day

The Country School

by

Clifton Johnson

With Illustrations
by the Author

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THIS book is in no sense a history of education, but is an attempt to present intimately and clearly the salient features of the schools of the last century in their more picturesque and poetic aspects. I do not deal with theories or ideals or technical details, but portray those things which linger in the memory of whoever has attended such schools. The charm of the old school days never wears off — and it is the charm that dwells in one's remembrance, even if there was some bitter mixed with the sweet. My endeavor has simply been to make this mystic and delectable past alive once more.

The material is not a compilation from other books, but is based entirely on personal experiences, in part my own, but more largely those of friends and acquaintances. Some of these friends and acquaintances are no longer living, and the reminiscences of the earlier schools with which they supplied me it would be difficult again to duplicate.

In addition to the descriptions of characteristic schools, I devote a chapter to verbatim compositions and definitions which seem to me to have an unconscious humor

that is exceedingly attractive. Lastly, there is a chapter containing two schoolhouse dialogues. These were written for the occasions when they were produced, and they have a kind of rude and rustic individuality which made them quite successful, and I think they will prove entertaining to a much larger public.

CLIFTON JOHNSON.

HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS.

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The Country School

I

OLD-FASHIONED SCHOOL DAYS, 1800 to 1830

WINTER

THE place which I have especially in mind in describing school conditions early in the last century, is a village among the hills of western Massachusetts; but the characteristics I shall mention were much the same in all the old schools of New England and the states neighboring.

One morning, if you could have looked into a certain hilltop farmhouse, you would have seen Mrs. Enoch Hale, birch-broom in hand, sweeping her kitchen floor. It was the first week of December, and a brisk fire was burning in the cavernous fireplace. The woman's daughter was wiping off the table at the side of the room where she had been washing the breakfast dishes. She was a chubby little girl, rather small of her age, and stood on tiptoe while she gave the table a vigorous scouring.

"Isn't it school-time, Betsey?" asked her mother.

The little girl hung the dishcloth in the back room and trotted into the hall where stood a solemn-faced, tall clock. She looked up at it earnestly a few moments, made some half-whispered calculations, and returned to the kitchen. "It's twenty minutes past eight," she said to her mother.

"Well," responded the woman, "change your apron and run along. You won't be much too soon. There's your dinner basket by the door. I put up your dinner when I cleared away the breakfast things."

Mrs. Hale swept the dust she had brushed together into the fireplace and went about her other housework. Betsey quickly made herself ready, and soon was running along the highway toward the schoolhouse. The morning was clear and cold. The sun, just above the south-eastern horizon, was shining brightly, and made the brown, frosty fields sparkle in the light. Betsey lived more than a mile from the schoolhouse, and the road was a rough one. For a part of the way it led through the woods, but in the main it was bordered by open fields and shut in by stone walls. Betsey usually ran down the hills, and was pretty sure to arrive at the schoolhouse quite out of breath.

Her clothing was very neat, but rude in pattern and extremely plain. It had all been woven, colored, and made up at home. She herself had done some of the

knitting, and had spent tiresome hours at the quill wheel winding thread for the loom. Her dress was woollen, plain and straight, with no ruffles at neck or skirt, and

Schoolgirls

it was considerably longer than would be worn by little girls of her age now. Hooks and eyes served instead of buttons to fasten it at the back. She wore a little blue and white checked cotton apron, tied at the waist. Her

stout leather shoes were broad-soled and comfortable, but only ankle high. Stockings and mittens were striped blue and white. Over her short-cropped hair she wore a small white woollen blanket about a yard square. In her hand was the basket containing her lunch.

When she came trotting up to the schoolhouse she found a dozen of her mates on the sunny side of the building kicking their heels against the clapboards and waiting for the teacher. Betsey carried her dinner basket into the entry and then ran out and said, "Let's play tag till the schoolmaster comes."

The others agreed, and soon all were in motion, running, dodging, and shouting till the little yard and narrow roadway seemed full of flying figures.

The schoolhouse was a small, one-story building, brown with age. Behind, the woods came close up, while in front was a little open yard which merged into the highway that came over the hill eastward and then rambled west along the level. A little walk down the road was a house. No other was in sight, though at least half a dozen scattered homes lay on the farther side of the hill just beyond view. Opposite the schoolhouse was a pasture, and the children had worn a rough path through the grasses by the roadside on their way to and from the brook over the wall where they got water to drink.

This morning the smoke was curling up from the chim-

ney straight into the frosty air. The big boys took turns in making the fire. To-day Jonas Brill, with his coat tightly buttoned and the collar up, cap pulled down over his ears, and hands in his pockets, had come stumping along the hard frozen road just after sun-up. There was no lock to the schoolhouse — few country people at that time thought of locking doors — and Jonas walked right into the little entry. The space on one side was half-filled with three-foot wood. On the other side were rows of pegs for the pupils' hats.

An axe was handy, and the boy proceeded to split some

A little red schoolhouse

kindlings. He carried an armful of these inside. Jonas poked among the ashes, found the coals still alive, and

soon had a fine blaze in the big fireplace. He brought in more wood from the entry and some larger wood from the yard, where it had been left by the farmers of the district for the scholars to cut up. It was sled length as they left it, and it had to be cut two or three times before it was ready for the fireplace. Jonas chopped what he judged would be a day's supply, then went in and sat in the master's chair by the fire and made himself comfortable, awaiting the arrival of his schoolmates.

The room was plain and bare — no pictures, no maps, not even a blackboard. The walls were sheathed with wooden panels, but the ceiling was plastered. On each side, to the north and south, was a window, and at the back two. The fireplace was on the fourth side, projecting somewhat into the room. To the right of it was the entrance, and to the left was a door opening into a dark little closet containing pegs for the girls to hang their things on, and a bench where they set their dinner baskets.

A single continuous line of desks ran around three sides of the room, leaving an open space next the wall along which the big scholars walked when they went to their places. The seat accompanying this long desk was also continuous, and the scholars were obliged to step over it before being seated. Both seat and desk were raised on a little platform a few inches above the level of the floor. On the front of the desk was another seat, low down, for

the smaller children. These could use the desk for a back, but had no desk themselves, while the older ones had the desk, but no back. In the open space, in front, was the teacher's table, and on it two or three books, an ink bottle and quills, a lot of copy books, and a ruler. Jonas was using the teacher's chair, but he replaced it behind the teacher's table when the other scholars began to arrive.

In the midst of the game of tag some one cried, "The schoolmaster's coming," and the uproar ceased.

The master was a quiet, rather stern-looking young man, the son of a farmer of a neighboring town. For several winters he had been teaching, but not with the idea of making that his calling. He had gone through the common schools with credit, and studied at an academy for a year or two. Summers he worked on the farm, and he intended to be a farmer; but in winter work was slack at home, and, as he could be spared, he took the opportunity to gain ready money by teaching. There were many young men in the country towns doing likewise.

His pay was small, but he was at no expense for his living, as he "boarded round" — that is, he stayed with each family of the neighborhood for a length of time proportioned to the number of pupils it sent to the school. At the beginning of the term the teacher divided the number of days by the number of pupils, and thus determined

Getting the teacher's help in a hard problem

how long he should stay with each family. It sometimes happened that after staying all around the allotted time there were still a few days left to teach, and then, in order to have things come out even, the master would change his boarding place every night. When neighbor met neighbor it was always an interesting topic of inquiry where the teacher was stopping and where he was going next; and his having to "warm so many beds" was a standing joke.

The teacher of this winter's school was at present staying with the Holmans, and the four children of the family came down the hill with him, but ran on ahead when they

approached the schoolhouse. All had dinner baskets, the master included. Just before he reached the schoolhouse the children went inside, and when he entered the door he found them all standing in their places. He removed his hat, bowed, and said "Good morning."

In response the whole school "made their manners," or, in other words, the boys bowed and the girls courtesied. At the same time they said "Good morning, sir."

Then the older ones stepped over their seats, all sat down, and school began at once.

The daily sessions in the old-time schools were supposed to start at nine o'clock, but few teachers had watches, and they could not well be exact. Some would bring hour-glasses, but the only timekeeper a school was sure to have was a noon mark on a southern window sill. Even this was useless on clouded days, and a good deal of guessing had to be done.

The first exercise in the morning was reading in the Testament. Each pupil who was able read two verses. In those times prayers were not said in school, and the reading completed the morning worship. The older scholars now turned their attention to studying, and the smallest children were called up to say their letters.

The winter term began the week after Thanksgiving, and continued twelve, fourteen, and even sixteen weeks. The cold weather, bad travelling, and distance prevented

most of the younger children from coming; but the big boys and girls, who had been kept out at work during the summer, came instead, and the school would number twenty-five or thirty pupils. The more mature scholars, though almost men and women in size, were none older than fourteen or fifteen. As a rule they left school for good at that age, but a few would attend an academy in a neighboring town, and now and then a boy would fit himself for college by studying with the minister. College education for girls was unthought of, and no institution existed where such education could be had for the daughters.

The youngest scholars had no books. When they recited they came up before the teacher, who pointed out the letters in the Speller with his quill. This book was the famous Webster's Spelling Book, a blue-covered, homely little volume, containing, besides the alphabet and many long columns of words, the figures, Roman and Arabic, days of the week, months of the year, abbreviations, names of the States, and various other things. The speller also served as a reader. The first and simplest reading started with, "No man may put off the law of God." Farther on were some little stories and fables, accompanied by a few rude pictures. Lastly came the Moral Catechism, starting with the question, "Is pride commendable?"

A visit from the school committee-man

In spelling, the children began with word fragments of two letters. Elderly people sometimes speak of "learning their a-b abs," meaning by that the learning to spell syllables of two letters. They would spell thus: "A-b ab, e-b eb, i-b ib, o-b ob, u-b ub; b-a ba, b-e be, b-i bi, b-o bo, b-u bu, b-y by;" and so on right through the alphabet. By the time they possessed a Speller they would perhaps be able to spell cat and dog and other three-letter words. Besides spelling, they learned something of the sounds of the letters and to count a little. When the class finished reciting they were sent to their seats. The smallest children had neither slates nor books to amuse themselves with, and after reciting could only sit still and watch and listen to the others. Very tiresome they found this sometimes. If they became restless, so much the worse for them, for the teacher would then reprimand them, and tell them to fold their hands and be quiet, and perhaps threaten them with punishment.

The next older class were taking their first reading lessons from the Speller. Even the most advanced of the pupils used that book to spell from.

Another of the school books of the time was "The New England Primer." It was a small, thin, blue-covered volume, that contained many little stories, proverbs, rhymes, and questions, and quaint woodcuts, and was

quite religious in tone. In one place the alphabet was given with a picture and rhyme for each letter. Both pictures and rhymes were so rude that, in spite of the seriousness of the themes, they now seem to us decidedly humorous. Here are specimens of the jingles: —

"Noah did view
The Old World and New."

"Zaccheus, he,
Did climb the tree
His Lord to see."

"Young Obadias,
David, Josias,
All were pious."

About the middle of the forenoon the scholars put aside other tasks, and wrote. At close of school, on the night before, the teacher had set their copies — that is, he had written a sentence across the top line of a page in each scholar's "copy book." The children made these copy books at home from large sheets of blank, unlined paper, which they folded and sewed into a cover of brown paper, or one made from an old newspaper. In school, each pupil had a ruler and plummet, and with these made the lines to write on. They had no lead pencils, but the plummet answered instead. Plummets were made at home by melting waste lead and running it in shallow grooves two or three inches long

cut in a stick of wood. Sometimes the cracks in the kitchen floor were found to be convenient places to run the lead in. When the metal cooled a little, it was whittled and smoothed down and pointed, and perhaps, as a final touch, a hole was bored through the big end, that the owner might hang his plummet on a string about his neck.

Children just beginning to write made "hooks and trammels," the "hooks" being curved lines, and the "trammels" straight ones. After practising on these a while they were advanced to letters, and later to words and sentences. Each pupil had a bottle of ink and a quill pen. Whenever the pen became worn or broken, the teacher was asked to "mend" it; or, if entirely used up, the scholar would bring a fresh quill to the teacher, and say, "Please, sir, will you make my pen for me?" and the teacher, with his jackknife, would comply. The mending was simply whittling it down and making a new point. There was quite a knack in doing this quickly and well.

Toward eleven o'clock the girls had their recess, but it was short, and gave them little time to play. At the end of five minutes the teacher came to the door and rapped sharply on the side of the building with his ruler, which was the signal for them to come in. Then the boys had their recess.

Of history, grammar, and geography the pupils learned very little. The Speller barely touched on these subjects, but the children had no separate text-books for the studies named. Yet a few such text-books had been printed and were being used to an increasing degree in the schools of the period.

Telling grandma about the day at school

The children were taught to count on their fingers, and, in summer, when they came barefoot, toes, too, were made to do duty. Some progress, besides, was made in adding and subtracting. In learning to multiply they used little rhymes to help their memory, on the same plan as the counting ditty in Mother Goose, "One

two, buckle my shoe," etc. Finally, when they were in the highest class in school, they had a text-book called Root's Arithmetic. Like all the smaller schoolbooks, it had a grayish blue cover of paper pasted over thin wood. If the book were roughly handled, or bent much, the wood cracked and splintered, and, with ten restless fingers handling it, the cover, fragment by fragment, soon disappeared. The arithmetic scholars had slates on which they did their sums. When the teacher pronounced the sums correct, these were neatly copied from the slate into blank books, made in the same manner as were the children's writing books and known as "ciphering books."

The forenoon wore away, and the sun shone in full at the southern windows. Just as the shadow of the middle frame crept into a little furrow cut in the wooden sill with a jackknife, school was dismissed. Before the shadow was out on the other side of the noon mark the girls had secured their dinner baskets and wraps from the little closet back of the chimney, and the boys had grabbed up theirs in the entry, and the whole school was in the yard. To-day they all climbed over to the sunny side of the stone wall back of the schoolhouse, and soon were busy eating.

Beneath the cloth in the square little baskets were bread and butter and doughnuts and gingerbread, and perhaps

an apple or two. When they had finished eating they began to chatter more freely, and most of the scholars clambered back over the wall and ran down to the brook for a drink. Lyddy Mason had brought a bottle of sweetened water, and didn't need to go to the brook. The sweetening was supplied by maple sugar, and the rest of the children looked on with envious eyes while Lyddy emptied her bottle.

In the wood back of the schoolhouse were frequent beech trees, now bare-limbed, but very handsome in their smooth, gray, mottled bark. Among the leaves on the ground were many of the brown nuts scattered there by autumn winds and frosts. The squirrels were busy harvesting them, and with noisy chatter raced about over the ground and up the tree trunks. The children came too, and with bits of brush poked about under the beeches, and ate, and filled their pockets. Then, perhaps, they would start a game of "hide and seek," and when the child at the goal shouted "Coming!" there would be one of his companions behind every neighboring tree trunk and boulder.

Other games they often played were blindman's-buff, tag, hull-gull, odd or even, and ball. The ball was a home-made affair of old stocking ravellings wound together and covered with sheepskin. The club was a round stick selected from the woodpile.

At about one o'clock the rapping of the teacher's ruler on the clapboards of the schoolhouse brought the children in, and work was resumed. Spelling, reading, and writing were gone through with again. The only change was in the case of the older scholars, who read from the Testament in the morning, but in the afternoon used instead a book of prose and verse selections called "The Art of Reading."

As the day wore on, the weather grew colder; the wind came up and rattled the loose clapboards, and whistled about the eaves and chimney-mouth, and made the branches of the trees back of the schoolhouse sway and shiver. Winter seemed to have pounced down on the region all at once, and the Indian summer, which had held on this year longer than usual, was brought to a sudden end. A good deal of air came in at the cracks of the little building, and the master found it necessary to pile the wood on the fire more and more frequently. Now and then one of the big boys would be sent out in the yard for a fresh armful of the three-foot sticks. He would set them up against the wall next the fireplace, in which the flames were dancing and making mad leaps up the chimney, as if anxious to join the tumult of the wind outside.

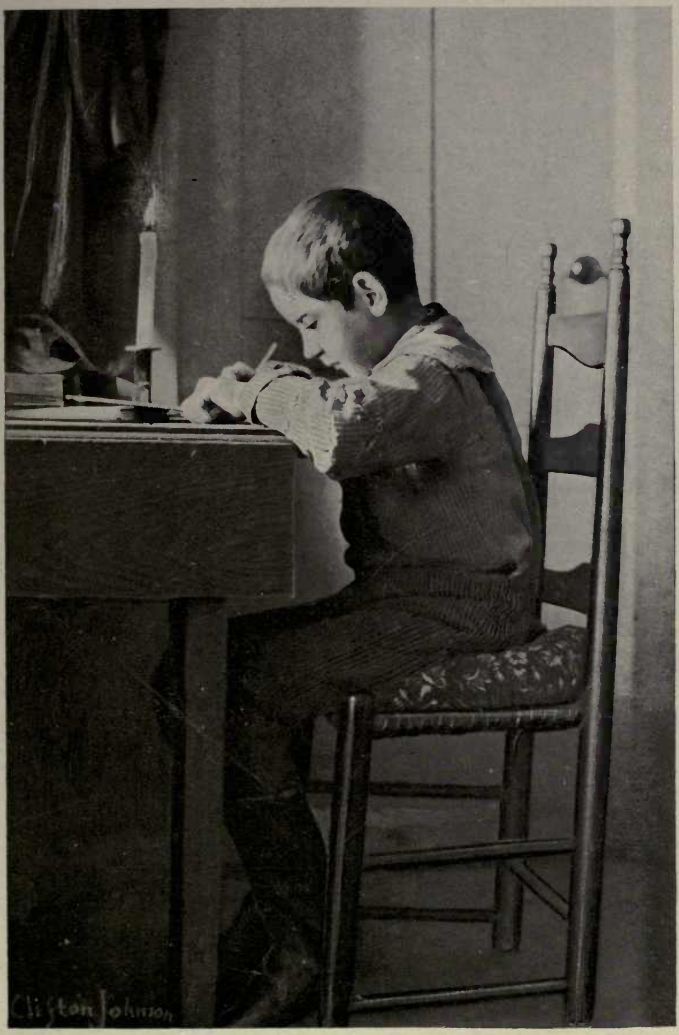
Just after recess one of the boys said all the cut wood in the yard was gone. Jonas Brill, whose duty it had

been to furnish a supply for the day, had not calculated on such cold weather, and the master had to call on two of the big boys to go out and cut more. To be sure, there was a small store of wood ready cut in the entry, but that was reserved for an emergency. A little before school closed the master asked, "Who is going to make the fire in the morning?"

Willie Smith said it was his turn, but he had an errand to do, and he didn't believe he could get there in time. Jonas Brill then said he would make it again. The question, who should chop the wood and build the fire for the next day, was one which had to be decided each afternoon.

When the school was ready to close, the teacher appointed one of the girls to get her mates' things from the closet and pass them around. As soon as the girls had pinned the little blankets over their heads and put on their mittens, the whole school rose, and one by one, beginning with the smallest children, they were dismissed. Each paused at the door, and turning toward the teacher "made his or her manners."

Once outdoors, the scholars separated, some to go up the road, some down, while three or four cut across lots home. Betsey had company about half way. Then the road divided, and she went on alone. The sky had grayed over, and the sun, dully glaring in the haze,



Getting his arithmetic lesson

was just sinking behind a western hilltop. The wind was blowing sharply, and the leaves were rustling along the frozen earth trying to find some quiet nook or hollow to hide in. The little girl bent her head and pushed on against the wind, even humming a little to herself, and seemed not at all to mind the roughness of the weather.

Nevertheless, she was glad to get home, and to stand and rub her hands before the fire snapping and blazing in the big fireplace.

Just before going to bed, Mr. Hale put his head out of the door to see what the weather prospects were. The wind had gone down a little, but it was snowing. "Waal," he said, "I thought 'twould snow before morning, but I didn't s'pose 'twould begin so quick. I declare, it's coming down considerable thick, too."

He withdrew his head, brushed a few white flakes from his hair, and stood some minutes by the fire warming himself. Then he shovelled the ashes over the coals and went to bed.

The storm proved an unusually heavy one. At daylight on the morrow the air was still full of the falling flakes, but the storm slackened presently, and by breakfast time it had stopped snowing. The brown fields had been deep buried in their winter mantle, and there were big drifts in the road.

Betsey went to school that day on an ox sled. She started directly after breakfast, as the sled was to collect all the other scholars who lived along the way, and there were drifts which must be shovelled out. Her father and three big brothers went too, and shouted at the oxen as they plodded along the roadway; but now and then there was a pause when they found the road blocked by a drift which required shovelling. They picked up other children, and presently had a sled full, some cling-

Starting for school

ing to the stakes at the sides, others sitting on the bottom, all shouting, or stamping, or pelting the oxen, and having a great frolic.

Some time before the ox sled party reached its destina-

tion Jonas Brill had ploughed his way through the snow to the schoolhouse. He wished Willie Smith had made his own fire that morning. However, there was no helping the matter. He stamped the snow from his boots on the door-sill and carried in the kindlings from the entry; but, to his dismay, he found no coals among the ashes — naught but a few sparks, which at once flashed out. Jonas felt that his life was a hard one. It was before the time of matches, and he must go to a neighbor's and borrow some fire. He pulled off a broad strip of green hemlock bark from a log in the yard, and kicked along through the snow to the nearest house, where he was made welcome to all the coals he wanted. He wrapped several in the green bark, and returned.

When he had deposited the coals in the fireplace and piled the kindlings on top, he got down on his hands and knees, and, by blowing lustily, fanned the coals into a blaze; and when the fire was well started he went out and cleared a little space next the woodpile. There he was chopping when Betsey and the children with her arrived on the ox sled. Another sled-load soon came from the opposite direction, and the scholars were all there.

They tramped around in the snow till the ox teams left, and then went indoors and crowded about the fire.

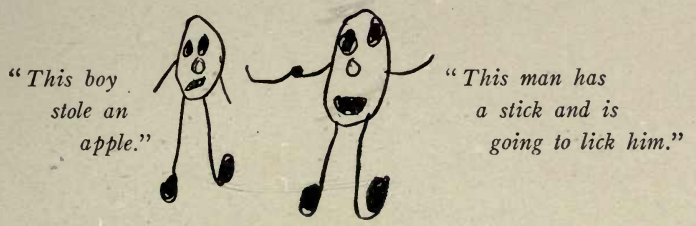
Snowballing

Shortly afterward the master came, and school began. This day was much like the day before, except that they had a shorter nooning, because the deep snow had put a stop to most of their open-air sports, and school closed earlier. The short noonings and early closing were usual throughout the term.

Winter had now fairly begun. In spite of the cold and the bad travelling, the pupils were quite regular in attendance. They, for the most part, walked back and forth, rarely getting a ride, unless when, after a storm, the roads had to be broken out. The brook, these winter days, was frozen and snow-covered, and the children, when thirsty, would hold a snowball in their hands till

it became water-soaked, and then suck it. They did not care to play out of doors much, though at times some of the older boys and girls would sally forth and snowball, or start a game of "fox and geese." The girls were kept in more than the boys, because of their skirts, which easily became wet and frozen in the snow, and also on account of their shoes, which only came ankle high, and had a tendency to fill with snow at the sides. They had no leggings, but when the roads were worst would perhaps pull on a pair of old stockings over their shoes.

School kept every day in the week except Sunday, and there was no pause at Christmas, or New Year, or Washington's Birthday, for none of these days was made much of at that time. If the teacher was sick, or for some other reason lost a day, he would make it up at the end of the term. Thus it happened that the "last day" varied from Monday to Saturday.



A drawing by one of the school children

II

OLD-FASHIONED SCHOOL DAYS

SUMMER

THE summer term began the first Monday in May. In various ways it was different from the winter term. The teacher was not a man this time, but a young woman. There were fewer scholars, as the big boys were kept out to work on the farm; but Betsey Hale came trudging over from the farm each day with her dinner basket on her arm. Something besides food was in the basket now — that is, sewing; for this was one thing taught in summer.

Instead of the little white blanket which Betsey had worn in winter for a head covering, she now had a sunbonnet made of copperas-colored cotton cloth over pasteboard. This pasteboard had been made at home by pasting a lot of old newspapers together, and it was apt to be rather limpsey. Her dress was of cotton, woven by her mother, in blue and white stripes, and very simple in its make-up. There were no buttons on it, and its only fastening was a cord at the neck. She wore shoes and stockings to-day, but later in the season,

when the weather was a little warmer, she would go barefoot.

The schoolroom had been trimmed with evergreens, and the wide mouth of the fireplace had been filled with boughs of pine and laurel.

Learning her lesson at home

The teacher had a pair of scissors dangling from her belt and used them to point out the letters in the Speller when the A-B-C class gathered about her. A good many small children came in summer who could not get to school during the cold weather — occasionally one not

over three years old. Such a little fellow would very likely get to nodding, and the teacher would pick him up and carry him to the closet, where, on the bench with the girls' dinner baskets, he would have his nap out. By and by he would emerge and toddle to his place, quite bright after his sleep.

Most of the little ones were dismissed early, and those who could handle a needle brought patchwork, so that, by reason of this employment and the shorter hours, they had a much more comfortable time of it than in winter.

Older scholars, besides patchwork, brought towels and tablecloths to hem. Some of them worked samplers. Betsey made quite a large sampler this term — fourteen by twenty inches. It was on green canvas, and the stitches were taken with yellow and red silk. First a checked border was made, then the alphabet in small letters was worked in across the top, next the figures and capitals, and under those a Scripture verse, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Below that came her name and age, and, at the bottom, flowers in a flower-pot, a small tree, a lamb, a dog, and a lion.

These samplers, when elaborate, were often framed, and that was what was done with Betsey's, after the summer term came to an end. Then it was hung at home in the "best room" — that is, the parlor. As

there was in those days no indelible ink, all the clothing had to be marked by stitching, and the sampler showed how to make the letters.

This term school closed every other Saturday. In most towns, when they began to shorten the number of school days in a week, they first took off Saturday afternoon; but here the scholars had to come so far that it was thought best to give them a whole day every other week. On Friday or Saturday afternoon, whichever happened to be the last afternoon of the school week, the children studied the Catechism. It was a thin little book, divided into two parts. Part First was headed "Historical"; Part Second was the "As-

The road to learning

sembly Catechism." The historical part had nearly two hundred questions and answers, and at the top of each page were two small square pictures portraying some Bible scene, and below each was a reference to the story it illustrated.

Part Second had in it one hundred and seven questions, largely doctrinal, beginning with "What is the chief end of man?"

Once a year, extending over three Sundays, the children said the Assembly Catechism in the meeting-house. Just after the sermon, the boys on one side, the girls on the other, they formed in long parallel lines in the middle aisle, facing each other, all very prim and solemn and scared. The minister came down from the pulpit overhung by the big sounding-board, and took his place in the deacons' seat, which ran along the front of the pulpit. The minister put the questions and the children answered in turn. First a boy, then a girl, would step forth from the lines, face the questioner, and give the answer, and this solemn routine continued till a response had been elicited from the last little girl, whose frightened murmur could scarce be heard a yard away.

On the first Sunday the children answered as far as the commandments — forty-four questions; the second Sunday, they went on through the commandments to the eighty-first question; and the third time finished

A play-school in the hayfield

the book. Only those stood who could answer, and while the first day saw quite a crowd of children before the pulpit, on the final day the answers had become so difficult that only a few of the older boys and girls remained.

There were five days in the year which were recognized as holidays: Fast Day, Independence Day, Training Day, Election Day, and Thanksgiving Day. The second was the only one which came within the bounds of either school term. It was celebrated rather quietly, and for the children was not especially different from any other week day when school did not keep, except that less work was given them to do. They had no torpedoes, firecrackers, or toy pistols, and they made little noise.

Through all the hot weather, until the summer was nearly at an end, the school continued in session. On warm days the question, "Please, ma'am, may I go down and get a drink?" was a frequent one, and nearly all day one or another of the children could be seen on their way to and from the pasture hollow where the brook ran. They had no cup to drink from, unless they shaped a big leaf for the purpose. Usually they would kneel down on the stones and dip their lips into the stream, and with none of the fear, which might disturb the moderns, of swallowing water snakes, frogs, pollywogs, or like creatures that were possibly swimming there.

A recitation in arithmetic

The teacher often allowed some of the scholars to go out and study under the trees "when they were good." Many a time did Betsey sit under the beeches in the grove behind the schoolhouse with book in hand; but the grove was not so good a study place as indoors, there were so many things about to see. The temptation was to fall to dreaming, to listen to the wind whispering through the boughs and to the faint murmur of the brook from the pasture hollow, to watch a wandering butterfly, the squirrels and the birds, or the leaves fluttering above her head, or to turn around to the gray tree trunk at her back and gaze in fascination at the ants journeying up and down the bark. Yet though these things inter-

fered with her studying, the experience was so pleasant that she went out as often as the teacher would let her.

The teachers were all quite strict and allowed small liberty, and their punishments for little misdemeanors

"Wrastling"

were often severe. However, Betsey herself was naturally obedient and gentle, and she fared very well. Once, for making too much noise, she had to stand on the floor with her hands tied behind her; and again, for whispering, had to sit beside a great, coarse boy. These were the only serious punishments she ever received.

One winter term two of the big girls persisted in looking out of the window, and Betsey was quite frightened when the master shook a warning finger at them and said he would put *them* out through the window if they looked again. This teacher chewed tobacco, and had an odd way of holding his quid between his lower lip and teeth, making a queer lump on his chin. The two big girls took revenge on him by rolling up wads of paper and imitating the master with his quid, and he could not very well punish them without making himself ridiculous. The commonest form of punishment was feruling.

The woman teacher was addressed as "Ma'am." When a scholar wished to speak to her, he would not raise his hand to attract her attention, but would either go to her, or speak right out. At close of school, as the children were leaving the room, the boys turned to the teacher, hats in hand, and bowed, and the girls courtesied, and each said "Good afternoon, ma'am."

The children liked also to make their manners when they met some one on the road. Very likely several of the little girls would join hands and stand by the wayside and courtesy to a person passing, and then, if that person smiled down on them and said, "Nice children," they were much pleased.

In summer, as in winter, the teacher boarded around. The summer teacher was pretty sure to be young, usually

taught a few years, then married, and taught no more. Her pay was from a dollar to a dollar and seventy-five cents a week.

As the term drew to a close the scholars began to learn "pieces" to speak on the last day. A good many learned hymns. Betsey studied this term a little poem of Mrs. Barbauld's called "The Rose." They did not write compositions.

Planting flower-seeds

Last day came this time on Thursday, in the middle of August. The sun rose clear and warm, the air was heavy and still, and the weather promised to be very

hot. All the children came dressed in their best, which made the day seem like Sunday, and added to the feeling of strangeness and excitement which overhung the great occasion.

Betsey started at about the usual time. She was barefoot, but carried, besides her dinner basket, her best shoes and stockings in her hand, for she must keep them from the dew which dampened the grass and from the dust of the roadway. As she walked along she repeated over and over aloud the poem she was to recite in the afternoon. When she got to the schoolhouse, she wiped her feet on the wet grass and put on her shoes and stockings.

The morning session was short, and mostly occupied by reviewing for the exercises of the afternoon. Those children who lived close enough then ran home, and the rest went to the nearest neighbor's and borrowed chairs, with which they filled the open space back of the teacher's table. On the day previous they had given the room a great sweeping and scrubbing, and had torn down the dry evergreens from the fireplace and about the windows and replaced them with fresh. Now they put finishing touches to the trim, did various little things, and finally were ready to eat dinner. Meantime great clouds had gathered in the west and had rolled up across the sky, and presently the first big,

threatening drops of a shower came pelting down. The children were obliged to eat their dinners indoors, and as the storm increased, it was a mournful little company that gathered at the windows, munching their bread and butter and watching the lightning flash and the sheets of rain drive past.

But just as they had concluded that "Last day" was spoiled, the storm suddenly ceased, and the water-drops clinging to the leaves and grasses danced in the breeze that blew, and sparkled in the sunlight, while the big thunderheads sank behind the eastern hilltops. Then the scholars thought nothing could have happened better.

Those that had gone home returned, and presently school commenced. The visitors began to arrive soon, and they kept coming till the room was pretty well crowded. The fathers and mothers were there, and some of the older brothers and sisters; but the two persons of most importance were the "school committee-man" and the minister. There was one school committee-man in each district, whose duty it was to hire the teacher, to see that the schoolhouse was kept in repair, and attend to like matters. The pupils were quite awestruck by the presence of so many of their elders, and felt that they must behave their best, and their hearts beat fast at the thought of saying their lessons before so many.

First, the little ones were called out on the floor to recite. They said the letters, spelled a few short words, counted a little, answered a number of the first questions in the Primer, and some of the first questions in the Catechism. Then the teacher asked a list of questions about Bible characters, "Who was the strongest man? Who was the meekest man? Who was the wisest man? Who was the most patient man?" etc. Lastly, they were asked what town they lived in, the name of the minister, what State they lived in, the name of the Governor, what country they lived in, and the name of the President.

The next class, besides reading and spelling and a few simple exercises in arithmetic, gave the abbreviations and the Roman numerals.

The oldest scholars, after reading and spelling, repeated what they had learned of the multiplication table, and gave the sounds of the letters, each reciting in turn. Here is the way the letter-sounding exercise began: "Long a, name, late; long e, here, feet; long i, time, find; long o, note, fort; long u or ew, tune, new; long y, dry, defy. Short a, man, hat. Broad a, bald, tall. Flat a, ask, part. Diphthongs, o-i, o-y, voice, joy; o-u, o-w, loud, now. B has only one sound, as in bite. C is always sounded like k or s, thus: c-a, ca; c-e, ce; c-i, ci; c-o, co; c-u, cu; c-y, cy."

So they would rattle it off to the end of the alphabet. Another thing the older scholars learned in school and recited last day was the names of the books in the Bible.

After this class finished, the children were called on to speak their pieces. One after another the larger pupils came out before the company and said the hymns and poems they had learned. In starting to speak and in closing, the boys bowed and the girls courtesied.

The end of recess

The teacher had made a rose of thin paper for Betsey to hold while she spoke her piece, but, though she had it in her hand, she was so excited she forgot to hold it up for the audience to see. However, she spoke the piece very prettily.

Meantime the writing books and the ciphering books and samplers had been passing from hand to hand among the visitors, who examined them with considerable care. Now the teacher turned to the visitors, and said, if there were any remarks to be made, the school would be glad to hear them. Three or four of the men got up one after the other, and each said he had been much pleased with the exercises. "You are nice children," one man declared; "you done well."

Another said, "You have answered some questions which I presume a good many of us older people present couldn't have answered."

Lastly the minister rose. Save for his mild voice all was very quiet in the little room. The children with folded hands sat listening, and the older people were attentive too. Through the open windows came the wind in a gentle current. Outside, a multitude of insects mingled their voices in a continuous murmur, but among them, at intervals, sounded the strident, long-drawn note of a *Cicada*. The breeze made a light fluttering in the trees behind the building, and there, too, a wood bird was singing. By the roadside the visitors' teams were hitched, and, as the minutes drowsily sped, the children half consciously heard the horses stamping, and nibbling at the bushes.

The substance of the minister's remarks was that

An excuse for being late

the scholars should be good children, should mind their parents, and not neglect their books in vacation, for, while "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy; all play and no work makes Jack a mere toy." At the close of the talk the company bowed their heads, and the minister offered prayer. This ended the exercises of the day, and the visitors passed out.

The scholars still remained seated. It was the custom of the woman teacher, at the close of her term, to give the children some little presents, and now was the time for distribution. The eyes of the pupils had wandered many times with curious interest to the small package which had lain on her table all the afternoon. The gifts it contained were simple and inexpensive, but they gave a great deal of pleasure. Some of the children received a half yard of bright-colored ribbon, one would get a man of sugar, another a more substantial man of tin. Again, it would be a picture, or a stick of cinnamon, or a tiny illustrated story book costing a cent or two.

Then the scholars began picking up their books and other belongings. Betsey got her copy book and ciphering book and sampler from among those which had been passed about to show the visitors, her basket and bonnet from the closet, her Primer, Speller, Testament, and reading book, and her quills, plummet, ruler, and

ink from her desk, and, thus loaded, passed through the schoolhouse door. Her folks had come with a team and were talking with some of the neighbors. She climbed into the wagon, and soon they jogged off toward home.

A holiday — playing at gypsies

Children and visitors had all gone. Only the teacher remained. She had closed the windows, and now sat with her elbow on the table and her head on her hand. Through the door came the murmurous voices of the insects, the faint ripple of the brook over its stones in the pasture, and the dull tinkle of a cowbell far off.

Presently a team came rattling along the highway and stopped before the schoolhouse. The teacher rose quickly, gathered up her few things, and went out. She lived six miles distant, and was now going home. Her father had driven over to visit the school, and since the close of the exercises he had been to her last boarding place to get the little hair trunk which was in the back part of the wagon. The teacher climbed in, the man clucked to the horse, and with the sun low in the western haze shining full in their faces, they followed the road along the level, and by its winding, bush-lined course were soon hidden from view.

The teacher going home

III

THE SCHOOLS BETWEEN 1830 AND 1860

IN times of peace the changes wrought in the habits, manners, and institutions of a people are very gradual. Shreds and remnants of every custom which has had general acceptance linger long after that custom has in most quarters disappeared. Thus, in the New England school of the period just preceding the Civil War, the educational methods and the schoolroom environment continued in many communities to be much the same as half a century before. What is here recounted is fairly characteristic of the majority of schools and neighborhoods, but it will not bear a too literal application to particular towns and villages.

The school year still consisted of two terms, one in summer and the other in winter. As a rule, a man taught in winter and a woman in summer, and the teachers "boarded round." The custom of boarding round was, however, less universal than formerly, and was gradually falling into disuse. Schoolbooks were becoming more varied and numerous, and were less stilted in style than in times past. Nor were they so solemnly

religious as they had been. Instead, they were inclined to be gently moralizing, and never told a story without preaching a little sermon at the end, even if they did not pause now and then midway to give a dose of proper advice.

I wish to describe with some detail an average school of the period located in an outlying village of one of the old Massachusetts towns of the Connecticut Valley. The score of houses which made up the hamlet were scattered along a two-mile strip of meadow land which lay between a low mountain ridge on the east and the river on the west. Midway on the single north and south road stood the weather-worn little school building. A narrow, open yard, worn bare of grass for a space about the doorstep, separated the schoolhouse from the dusty road. At one end of the building a big apple tree partly shadowed it. At the other end was a lean-to shed where the wood for the fire was stored.

Inside of the schoolhouse, a narrow entry ran across the north side, but this was completely filled in the middle by a great chimney. The boys kept their caps on the lines of pegs in the front entry; and in a closet back of the chimney, entered from the schoolroom, the girls hung their sunbonnets or hoods, and other wraps.

The small square main room had bare, plastered walls and ceiling. Not only was the plaster grimy with

smoke and age, but it was much cracked, and here and there were holes that the boys had pounded or dug through. Each side of the room, except the north, had two windows which looked out on the farm fields, orchards, and mountain. The chief feature of the

On the way to school

windowless side of the room was a wide fireplace with its brick hearth. To the right of the fireplace stood a broom, and whenever the crackling fire snapped out a coal on the floor, the first boy who saw it was expected to jump up and brush it back. It was not always that a boy would take the trouble to brush the coals back by using the broom. A quicker method was to kick

them to the hearth with his boot or to crush the fire out by stepping on it. The boards about the hearth were therefore blackened with many little hollows where the coals had fallen, and were also well strewn usually with the powdered charcoal resulting from the coals being stepped on. These miniature explosions from the fireplace were quite entertaining to the children and made a grateful break in the monotony of the school work.

Another feature of the north side of the room was a small blackboard between the fireplace and the entrance. On this the big boys did their sums. The girls did not use it. A very moderate amount of mathematics was supposed to suffice for females, and they stopped short of problems that needed to be done on a blackboard.

Around the other three sides of the room, against the wall, ran a continuous desk, accompanied by a backless bench well polished with use. To get to their places, or to leave them, the boys would sit down, lift their heels, and with a quick whirl swing them to the other side. The girls on their side of the room had two hinged openings in this seat, which could be lifted to allow them to pass in and out, but most of them preferred to whirl as the boys did. A part of the time the scholars eased themselves of the discomfort of their

backless seats by turning about and using the edge of the desk as a support. Within the hollow square bounded by this outer desk and seat, on each of the three sides, was a movable bench with a back shoulder high. The end seats on these benches were thought to be particularly desirable, because they were so built as to have a support there for the elbow. The benches were for the smaller children who sat on them facing the center of the room, where was the teacher's desk and a single stiff-backed wooden chair.

An old-time schoolgirl costume

The teacher's desk was a simple four-legged affair with drawers in it that could be locked. The locking was an attribute of some consequence, for besides being

Enjoying a Saturday holiday

a repository for various articles that were the private property of the teacher, the drawers were a place of detention for certain belongings of the pupils which had been confiscated. Among the latter, pieces of rubber at one time figured very prominently. This occurred while the school was passing through a period of rubber-chewing. Rubber overshoes were in those days made of thick, black, natural rubber. After they were worn out, squares that made very good erasers could be cut from the heavier parts. The children discovered that chewing turned the rubber white, and they decided they preferred erasers of that color. In beginning on

a fresh piece the chewing was far from easy, but the rubber gradually softened as the process continued. Often the older scholars would get the smaller ones to do the preliminary masticating, and of course the little ones felt it an honor to do this for the big pupils and undertook the tiresome task willingly. As the rubber whitened it became much more elastic, and if you chose, you could stretch it over your fingers, fill it with air and make it explode with a pleasing pop. The master took away quantities of it and put the spoil in the secret recesses of his desk, or threw it into the fire; but the little folks persisted in the manufacture for a long time.

The chief school dignitary of the village was the "prudential committee-man." He hired the teacher; he bought the water pail, the dipper, and the broom; and he saw that the woodhouse was properly filled and the premises kept in repair. His position was not what the poet calls "a downy bed of ease," for he was the subject of much comment and criticism. It was thought he had too strong a tendency to hire one of his own daughters when he possessed an unmarried one sufficiently advanced in age and learning; and, no matter who it was he selected, the teacher he hired frequently failed to suit the community. If, in such a case, the committee-man took sides with the teacher, the miniature

The school at work

war waxed quite fierce. On one occasion, in a quarrel over a teacher whom the committee-man would not dismiss, hostilities were more than a year in duration. All but six children left the school, and the dissenters hired a teacher and had a school of their own in one of the dissenting farmers' little out-buildings which had been used as a broom shop.

It was the duty of the district committee-man to go after the teacher whom he had engaged, if that person lived in a neighboring town. The committee-man rarely started soon enough to get his charge to the schoolroom on time; and the scholars, who gathered at nine o'clock, would "train around and have a gay time" while they awaited the teacher's arrival. Sometimes the teacher, before beginning, had to be taken to the "examining committee" at the town center and his or her qualifications tested by sundry questions. In such a case the teacher might not reach the schoolhouse ready for duty until afternoon.

We will suppose that the first week in May has come, and that the district committee-man has brought the new schoolma'am. After leaving her at the schoolhouse, he carries her trunk to his home, where it is to stay through the term. She is to board round, and it has already been decided where her stopping place for the first week shall be. Monday noon the children of that particular

home take charge of her, and feel it a great honor to escort her to "their house" to dinner. The teacher's advent into a family was always the occasion of extra preparation in the way of food and "tidying up," and conversation while she was present became a more than ordinarily serious occupation.

Boarding round, with its accompanying necessity of "visiting," change of quarters, and frequent making of new home acquaintances, was something of a hardship. The teacher found her quarters far from agreeable at times; but there was no picking places. The best bedroom, to which she was consigned, was perhaps stuffy with the gathered must of many months' unoccupancy, or the people were rough and slatternly in their habits, or the food was ill-cooked or scanty. I do not mean that these things were the rule, but they were to the boarder-round, to some extent, unavoidable.

Schools kept from Monday morning till Saturday noon. On Saturday afternoons the teacher went to the committee-man's and did her washing. She stayed over Sunday and attended church with the family. Some week-day evening, after school, she would probably again repair to the committee-man's to do her ironing.

In winter the teacher in some sections found himself feasted the whole term through on fresh pork. Fresh pork was esteemed one of the most palatable and sub-

stantial dishes the farm produced, and, on the principle of giving the teacher the best, each family put off hog-killing until he came. His invitation, delivered by the children, would be: "Our folks are goin' to butcher next week, and want you to come to stay at our house." Or an excuse for delaying his visit would come in this form: "Our folks want you to wait till week after next, 'cause we're goin' to kill a pig then." The master was heartily sick of pork long before the winter was through.

Passing the water

Immediately after the morning session began, the teacher read a selection from the Testament and offered a short extempore prayer. Children began to attend

school, in summer, soon after they passed their third birthday. At first they had no books, and their chief effort was given to sitting still. They were taught the alphabet at the schoolmistress's knee, and perhaps she pointed out the letters with a pretty penknife. The little folks found that penknife wonderfully attractive, and it was a great happiness to handle it and look at it when the teacher lent it to them.

Besides the letters, the teacher taught the smallest ones various little poems, such as "Mary had a little lamb," "Twinkle, twinkle, little star," and

> "How doth the little busy bee
> Improve each shining hour."

Then there were certain jingles, which were not only poetry, but exercises in arithmetic as well. Fancy a little tot solemnly repeating the following: —

> "See me; I am a little child
> Who goes each day to school;
> And though I am but four years old,
> I'll prove I am no fool.
>
> "For I can count one, two, three, four,
> Say one and two make three;
> Take one away, and two remain,
> As you may plainly see.

"Twice one are two, twice two are four,
And six is three times two;
Twice four are eight, twice five are ten;
And more than this I do.

"For I can say some pretty rhymes
About the dog and cat;
And sing them very sweetly, too,
And to keep time I spat.

"And, more than all, I learn that God
Made all things that I see;
He made the earth, he made the sky,
He made both you and me."

This chant was accompanied by appropriate gestures, such as counting on the fingers, pointing, and clapping.

The rhymes and verses learned by the children were often repeated in concert, and were one of the features of "examination day." Besides the moralizing, the arithmetical, and the story-telling verses, the children were taught hymns and short poems that were distinctly religious in nature. When the teacher's taste was musical, they had singing in school, and the virtues of the "pure and sparkling water" were extolled in temperance songs. There was no attempt to teach the children to read music, and a book was rarely used. The exercise was introduced simply because it was cheerful and agree-

able, and they all enjoyed it. Sometimes the tune was "pitched" by the teacher, sometimes by one of the better singers among the pupils. To "pitch" a tune was to start it and supposedly get it neither too high nor too low.

Gymnastics

By the time the smallest children had the alphabet learned they were supplied with a Webster's Speller. Later they had a "Child's Guide," or a "Young Reader." These books contained some little stories and poems, and were illustrated with rude woodcuts, but the owners of the books thought the pictures were very pretty. After the first reader the child advanced to an "Intelligent Reader," and finally to a "Rhetorical Reader." The

last-named volume was not illustrated and was bound in full buff leather like a law-book. The reading books were only used in the afternoon; but several classes read from the New Testament in the morning. The Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles were the sections which they studied, and these they read straight through, skipping nothing but the opening chapter of Matthew, which is mainly composed of the hard names of the patriarchs.

The beginners' book in mathematics was Colburn's Intellectual Arithmetic. Its first question was, "How many thumbs have you on both hands?" but in a few pages fractions were reached, and quite intricate problems. It was severe training, and the scholars all hated their Colburn's, and some of them shed tears in utter discouragement. After this "mental arithmetic" came a "written arithmetic," which was apparently supposed by educators to be more difficult than the former, but which the children found comparatively easy. The problems in this they did on their slates.

Civilization in later days decreed that the proper way to make erasures from a slate was to have a bottle of water and a rag. In earlier times, and those not very far removed, the natural method was almost universal; that is, the scholar spit on his slate, rubbed the moisture around with the tips of his fingers, then established

a more vigorous friction with the ball of his thumb, and finally polished his slate off with the back of his sleeve. That done, he settled himself down to conquer fresh fields in the mathematical world.

In the course of time the children began the study of Peter Parley's Geography. The book was small and square, and it had a number of pictures in it to give the child an idea of some of the strange peoples and curious animals that are to be found on the earth. For instance, there was a picture of a Chinaman with which the young student was sure to be impressed. His eyes were slanting, his hair was braided in a "pigtail" that hung down his back, he had a conical hat on his head and funny shoes on his feet. Across his shoulders he bore a wooden yoke, from the ends of which were suspended by their tails long strings of rats. How could the Chinese eat such things? What a strange people they were! Among the small separate pictures of animals was one of the hippopotamus — oh! so large and ugly! — and one of the rhinoceros with a dreadful horn right on his nose. It is no wonder if the little girls shuddered when they looked at these pictures.

Peter Parley in his text by no means confined himself to the technicalities of the subject. He tried to be entertaining and informal, and, what would scarcely be expected in a geography, he availed himself "of

A present

occasional opportunities to inculcate lessons of morality and religion upon the youthful heart." But the portion of the text that sank deepest into the memories of those who studied the book was a poem in the early pages which began thus: —

"The world is round, and like a ball
Seems swinging in the air,
A sky extends around it all,
And stars are shining there.
Water and land upon the face
Of this round world we see,
The land is man's safe dwelling-place,
But ships sail on the sea."

The more advanced pupils studied Murray's Grammar, and found out what nouns, verbs, etc., were, and learned to parse blank verse. Then there was Peter Parley's History, in two volumes. Volume I dealt with the New World, and Volume II began with Adam and the Garden of Eden, and told the story of the Old World. Only the first book was usually studied in the district school.

Another little book to be mentioned was Watts on the Improvement of the Mind. This was a deep and serious essay on the methods and the desirability of mental improvement. It was studied by only the oldest scholars, and even they found much of it beyond their comprehension.

At one time the more advanced pupils took up botany. The teacher's desk had a vase on it, and during the blossom season the botany class kept the vase well filled with wild flowers.

The times were sufficiently advanced so that the children now had "boughten writing books" instead of home-made ones, steel pens instead of quills, and in a meagre way pencils instead of plummets. The writing books were square in shape, ruled inside, but had

After school

no printed copies at the top of the page. These the master had therefore to set. He was supposed to do this each night after school, but if he forgot it, he had

to set the copies when the writing hour came. Some pupils wrote faster than others, and the smart one who filled out his page and still had more time at once desired to inform the teacher of his progress and to get a new copy. The boy raised his hand, therefore, half rose in his seat, and nearly wrung his arm off in a frantic effort to get the teacher's immediate attention. Some boys would even snap their fingers and clear their throats in the very hoarsest and most asthmatic manner of which they were capable. These violent methods of attracting the teacher's attention were, of course, not confined to the writing lesson.

A common requirement among teachers was that each child should recite a verse of Scripture at the close of the afternoon session. Hence, when four o'clock approached, Bibles were drawn forth, and a diligent search began for short verses, and a hasty attempt made to fix the one singled out in the mind. There was little solemnity about this exercise; rather, it was farcical and humorous.

"John, your verse," says the teacher.

Up pops the boy like a Jack-in-the-box, snaps out, "Jesus wept," and with a grin drops into his seat.

"Pray without ceasing," "Rejoice evermore," "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying," are examples of the verses which found favor in the children's minds. They had the merit of shortness, if no other. The boy was

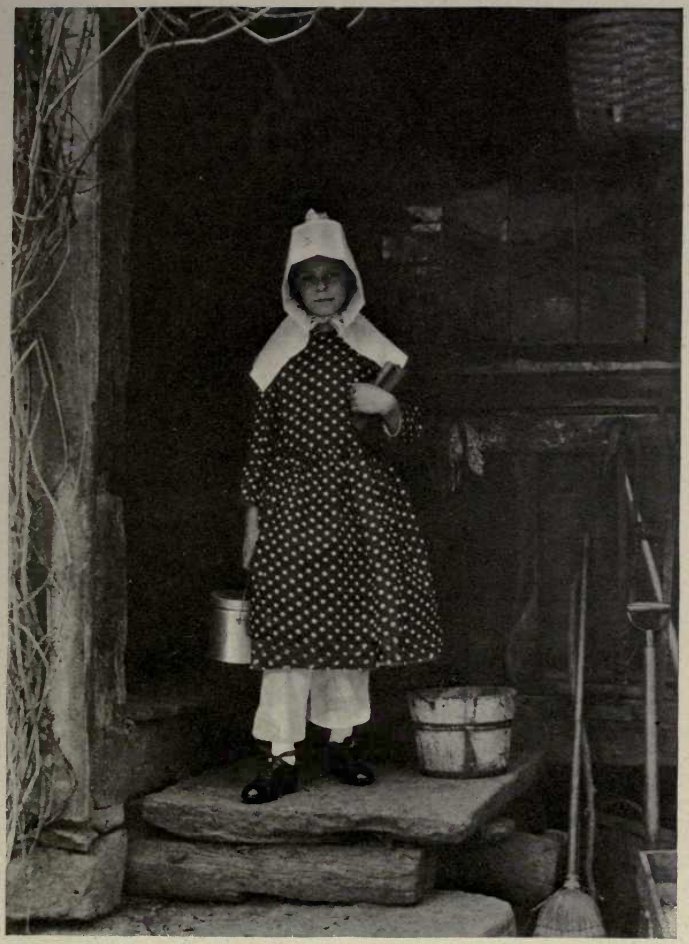
always serious when he rose, always rattled off the words very fast, and beamed with a never failing smile at the close of his performance.

On one occasion a boy's verse ran, "With God all things are peculiar."

"What?" said the teacher, "what was that?"

The boy repeated his words. The teacher doubted their authenticity, and the boy, on the following Sunday, went to his original source, which was a motto hung in the Sunday-school room at church, and found that the lettering in old English text had confused him. What it really said was, "With God all things are possible."

In the middle of each school session came recess. First the girls went out for a quarter of an hour, and when they were called in, the boys went out for the same length of time. Railroads were beginning to be built, but through the village of which I write, the old stages still ran. When the clatter and rumble denoting the approach of one of these vehicles was heard during school hours, the eyes of the children were sure to turn toward the windows in the hope of catching a fleeting glimpse of the big coach as it dashed past. To be out at recess when one went by was a great treat. Yet the children were a little afraid of it — the coach was so large, and, drawn by its four horses, it thundered past so swiftly. It was an impressive sight, and to the child the passengers



Ready for school

seemed superior beings, and the whole thing a vivid representation of power and of the mystery and vastness of the outside world.

There had been various changes in dress since the beginning of the century. Homespun had almost disappeared. Not many families could afford to buy "store clothes" for their boys, but cloth was purchased ready woven, and was cut and made at home into the required garments. Economy was studied in making up clothing, and the mother was careful to cut the suit for the growing boy several sizes larger than his present stature demanded. The boy had reason to complain at first of the bagginess of his garments, but before they were worn out he was pretty sure to be disturbed because of their general tightness and of their scantiness at the extremities. But this was the common lot of boys, and they might count themselves lucky if they were clothed in new store cloth, and not in something made over from the cast-off apparel of their elders.

The boys' caps were homemade too, sometimes of broadcloth, sometimes of catskin or muskrat skin. Often a leather visor was fastened on in front. At the sides were earlaps with strings at the ends. When in use the strings were tied under the chin; at other times the earlaps were turned up at the side of the cap, and the strings tied over the top.

Both boys and girls went to school barefoot in summer, but for special occasions had shoes. On the approach of cold weather the boys were sure to remind their parents that they needed a new pair of boots. These were rough-looking cowhides, into the tops of which the boys usually tucked their "pant legs." At parties and such other places as the tucked-in style would seem out of place, the pants were drawn down on the outside of the bootlegs, where they developed an irritating and uncontrollable tendency to hitch themselves upward. The boots were hardly wearable unless they were kept well greased, and even then the continual slopping around in snow and water made a series of hard wrinkles gather at the ankles. The wrinkles were particularly unyielding on cold mornings. There was no right and left nonsense about these broad-soled, square-toed boots, and the careful boy took pains to change them to opposite feet with regularity. He considered that to be the only way to keep them subdued and symmetrical.

The girls' dresses were of gingham in summer and of a fine-checked woollen in winter. They were very plain and simple in pattern, and were fastened down the back with hooks and eyes. The dresses were longer than are now in use, and with them were worn some curious garments known as "pantalets." A pantalet was like a straight sleeve, fastened just below the knee and extending downward to the ankles. It was necessary to tie

them quite tightly to keep them from slipping and they were always something of a trial on account of their tendency not to stay put. They might be either white or colored. White stockings were customary. For a little girl to wear black stockings would have been thought shockingly inappropriate. In warm weather the girls all wore gingham or calico sunbonnets; in winter quilted hoods,

Out at little recess

which were very comfortable and often were bright in color and gay with ribbons. They had long plaided coats that almost swept the ground and that had a wide cape. About their necks they wore knitted tippets.

The boys had overcoats, but they thought them effemi-

nate, and only put them on in the severest weather. Their chief protection from the cold in the way of an extra wrap was a striped knitted scarf which they called a "comforter." If the schoolroom was chilly, they might keep their comforters wound around their necks all through the school session. Every child had a pair of mittens. White was the orthodox color for the girls' mittens, and red and blue in stripes for the boys'. The shoes worn by the girls came barely up to their ankles and were slight protection when there was snow on the ground. Their feet were "sopping" in winter a good share of the time. Through the summer term the girls wore gingham aprons, or, in the case of one or two families esteemed "rich," black silk ones.

Among the most vivid recollections that grown-up people have of their school days are the memories of the punishments inflicted. What then stirred them to fear and trembling and anger now lies far off, mellowed by the haze of passing years, and though the echoes of the old feelings are many times awakened, the punishments are, in the main, like episodes in story-land, which we think of as onlookers, not as actors. The crude roughness and the startling effects produced have lost their old-time tragedy, and often have turned humorous.

"Spare the rod and spoil the child" was a Bible text which received the most literal acceptance both in theory

and practice. Teachers with tact to govern well without resort to force were rare, and it was the common habit to thrash the school into shape by main strength. Indeed, the ability to do this was considered by all the elders of that day of prime importance. Even the naturally mild-tempered man was an "old-fashioned" disciplinarian when it came to teaching, and the naturally rude and coarse-grained man was as frightful as any ogre in a fairy tale.

In summer, unless the teacher was an uncommonly poor one, or some of the scholars uncommonly wild and mischievous, the days moved along very harmoniously and pleasantly. In winter, however, when the big boys came in, some of them men grown, who cared vastly more about having a good time than getting learning, an important requisite of the master was "government." He ruled his little empire, not with a rod of iron, but with a stout three-foot ruler, known as a "ferule," which was quite as effective.

Some of the big boys who were there "just to raise the mischief," would perhaps dare the master to go outside and fight. Of course he wouldn't do that, but at times he had quite serious scuffles with rebellious pupils right in the schoolroom. The boys, on their part, would fight like tigers and make the master's nose bleed and tear his clothes.

The really severe teacher had no hesitation in throwing his ferule at any child he saw misbehaving, and it is to be noted that he threw first and spoke afterward. Very likely he would order the culprit to bring him the ferule he had cast at him, and when the boy came out on the floor would further punish him. Punishment by spatting the palm of the hand with a ruler was known as "feruling." The smarting of the blows was severe while the punishment lasted, but this was as nothing to a "thrashing." The boy to be thrashed was himself sent out to cut the apple-tree twigs with which he was to be whipped. Poor fellow! Whimpering, and blinded by the welling tears, he slowly whittles off one after another of the tough twigs. This task done, he drags his unwilling feet back to the schoolroom.

"Take off your coat, sir!" says the master.

The school is hushed into terrified silence. The fire crackles in the wide fireplace, the wind whistles at the eaves. The boy's tears flow faster, and he stammers a plea for mercy. Then the whip hisses through the air, and blows fall thick and fast. The boy dances about the floor, and his shrill screams fill the schoolroom. His mates are frightened and trembling, and the girls are crying. When the sobbing boy is sent to his place, whatever his misdemeanor may have been, the severity of the punishment has won him the sympathy of the whole school,

and toward the master there are only feelings of fear and hate. As for the culprit, he in his heart vows vengeance, and longs for the day when he shall have the age and stature to thrash the teacher in return. Occasionally a lad sent after switches made use of his liberty to slip off home, but he had to "catch it" when he came to school the next day.

As one of the old-time pupils expresses it, "The men teachers were often regular rough-cuts." One master of this class, when he noticed a boy misbehaving, had a habit of rushing at the culprit, catching him by the collar, and dashing him over the desks out to open floor space,

Loitering on the way home from school

where he would administer a thrashing. The children thought he acted as if he was going to kill the boy.

The most troublesome boys were not by any means always ill-natured. Often they were merely mischievous. The trouble might be due to an active mind and lack of employment. A boy who learned his lessons easily would have a lot of time on his hands. He couldn't keep still, and presently the teacher would catch him doing something that he ought not to do. Then he got a whipping. Very likely he might be a cordy little rascal, afraid of nothing, and about as disagreeable to tackle as a healthy hornet. The encounter was no fun for the teacher; and the boy, if he was punished frequently and severely, planned to lick that teacher when he grew up. But I never have heard of a boy who took this delayed vengeance.

Doubtless the whippings of the period varied much in severity, and, unless the master was altogether brutal or angered, the blows were tempered according to the size of the boy and the enormity of his offence. Nor were the boy's cries always a criterion of the amount of the hurt. It was manifestly for his interest to appear in such terrible distress as to rouse the master's pity, and with this in mind he to some extent gauged his cries. Nevertheless, the spectacle was not an edifying one, and happily the school thrashing as a method of separating the chaff from the wheat in boy nature is a thing of the past.

The list of milder punishments was a varied one. If the master saw two boys whispering, he would, if circum-

A punishment

stances favored, steal up to them from behind and visit unexpected retribution on the guilty lads by catching them by the collars and cracking their heads together. Frequently an offender was ordered out on the floor to stand for a time by the master's desk, or he was sent to a corner with his face to the wall, or was asked to stand on one leg for a time, or he was assigned a passage of Scripture and told to stay after school until he had learned and recited it correctly to the teacher. In certain cases he was made to hold one arm out at right angles to his

body — a very easy and simple thing to do for a short time, but fraught with painful discomfort if long continued. Sometimes this punishment was made doubly hard by forcing the scholar to support a book or other weight at the same time. When the arm began to sag, the teacher would inquire with feigned solicitude what the trouble was, and perhaps would give the boy a rap on his "crazy bone" with the ruler to encourage him to persevere. This process soon brought a child to tears, and then the teacher was apt to relent and send him to his seat.

Making a girl sit with the boys, or a boy with the girls, was another punishment. The severity of this depended on the nature of the one punished. For the timid and bashful it was a terrible disgrace.

Some of the punishments produced very striking spectacular effects, to which the present-day mind would feel quite averse. Fancy the sight of a boy and girl guilty of some misdemeanor standing in the teacher's heavy arm-chair, the girl wearing the boy's hat and the boy adorned with the girl's sunbonnet. Both are red-faced and tearful with mortified pride. They preserve with difficulty a precarious balance on their narrow footing, and every movement of one causes the other to gasp and to clutch hastily to prevent inglorious downfall.

To sit on the end of a ruler, which the teacher presently knocked from under the boy, was considered by some

The boys of the school go for a boat-ride

pedagogs an effective punishment. One master used to have the offending youngster bend over with his head under the table. Then the teacher whacked the culprit from behind with his heavy ruler, and sent him shooting under the table and sprawling across the floor. Another schoolmaster kept in the entry an old satchel which he would bring in on occasion, throw it on the floor, and order the offender to lie down with that for a pillow. Among the most ingenious and uncomfortable in the varied list of punishments was the fitting a cut from a green twig, partially split, to the offender's nose. In cases of lying, this rude pair of pinchers was attached to the scholar's tongue.

As an example of the brutal extreme to which some masters went, I cite the case of a teacher who threatened on occasion to cut off the children's ears. Imagine the whole school listening with breathless and open-eyed horror while the master, sitting in his chair with a little girl standing before him, is explaining the process of ear-cutting, and at the same time whetting his knife on his stout boot. He would go so far as to rise and rub the back of the blade along the child's ears. The scholars soon saw he was not to be believed, but the threat was too frightful to altogether lose its dread, however often repeated.

The women teachers were often as vigorous disciplinarians as the men, and capable of originating methods

of their own that were truly distressing. For instance, one teacher would have the smaller offenders put out their tongues, which she would proceed to snap with a bit of whalebone. Oh, how that hurt! This punishment seemed to them the meanest that could be invented.

Boxing ears, keeping in at recess or after school, and the confiscation of playthings which hindered the youthful mind in its pursuit of knowledge were mild visitations of the law that only need mention. Jack-knives frequently figured among the contraband articles locked in the teacher's desk; for what boy can behold a piece of soft pine wood in any shape whatever without desiring to whittle it? The desks offered an inviting surface on which the boy itched to carve his initials, and that done, he was inspired to put a few added touches and simple designs on the rest of the space within reach. If the beloved jack-knife was captured by the teacher and held in durance, the boy still had recourse to his pencils, and with these could make in the soft wood various indentations and markings pleasing to his soul.

In describing the schoolroom interior, only one chair was mentioned; but there was another which had long since seen its best days and was now minus its back. On it the boy who did not learn his lessons was sometimes required to sit with a fool's cap on his head. This treatment was expected not only to shame the boy, but to serve

as a warning example to the school. His cap was usually improvised by the teacher out of a sheet of white paper or even a newspaper. Some teachers, however, had a fool's cap ready made. One such cap that was particularly elaborate had a tassel on top and tassels at each of the three corners below, and on its front was painted the word "DUNCE" in large capitals.

The games of the children were much the same as those of earlier days. In winter there was a good deal of rough skirmishing among the boys, snowballing and ducking each other when chance offered. The small children at times fared hardly, and once in a while a girl had a severe experience when her mates took a notion to wrap her in her long cloak and bury her in a snowdrift. As soon as the burying was accomplished, the buryers would run away, and the buried would struggle out half suffocated and bedraggled with snow from head to foot. "Snap-the-whip" was a popular game when the snow was deep. The children, except the one most concerned, thought it great fun, and shouted in glee every time the whip snapped and the little end boy or girl broke loose to spin head over heels into a drift.

On stormy winter days, when the children all brought their dinners and the teacher was not there, the excited racing and tearing around that was done in the little room at noon gave a vivid though unconscious representation

of Babel and Bedlam. At the same time there was a good deal of running in and out, and the floor by schooltime was mottled all over with snow and water.

Sliding was in order when there was a crust on the snow. The sleds were great home-made affairs that three or four could sit on if need be. Sleds were usually shod with hard-wood runners, but some boys went to the blacksmith's and had their sleds fitted with runners of iron. The boy owner of a sled was expected, on the down-hill trips, to sit behind and steer. With his square-toed boot grating along behind he could make the sled go just where he pleased. In good sliding weather boot-toes disappeared wonderfully fast, and he was a lucky fellow whose footwear did not begin to gape at the extremities before spring. Presently some genius invented a copper-toed boot, which no doubt "filled a long-felt want," for the inventor realized a fortune by it.

Children who could not afford a sled would make something that served instead out of barrel staves. Three or four staves laid close together did for the bottom, and as many more bowed over above did for the top. The ends of the staves where they met were nailed together, and the staves were also nailed to a brace run through the middle of the contrivance.

Favorite summer games were tag, drop-the-handkerchief, puss-in-the-corner, and, most popular of any, there

Playing drop the handkerchief

was hide-and-coop, which was also called hi-spy. In playing this, the children who hid always shouted "Co-o-op!" as soon as they had concealed themselves; and each time the one who was "it" caught sight of any of the hiders, he ran and touched the goal and hollered, "Hi-spy Jim!" or Jane, or whatever the one's name might be.

He should have said, "I spy," but that was contrary to the established custom. The girls jumped rope a good deal. They would jump to and from school, and at recess

would try to see who could jump the most without missing. In fact, they jumped until they were exhausted.

The surroundings of the schoolhouse were half wild and contained many delightful possibilities for pleasure. A little way down the road was a large tree, under which in summer the children played cubbyhouse. Near by was a good-sized brook bordered by brushy woods, and in the thickets the little folks gathered patches of green moss, with which they would cover a square of earth under the tree; and that was the foundation of the cubbyhouse. They brought from home broken pieces of dishes, bits of carpet, and other odds and ends for furniture and house-ware. Acorn cups did for tea-cups, and the children made fancy little pails out of brown oak balls by cutting off a portion, hollowing out the rest, and fixing in a slender leaf stem for a handle. With some short pieces of board they contrived shelves for the dishes. In connection with the cubbyhouses they made some small inclosures and caught toads and put them in these pens. They called the toads their pigs. The older scholars played they were parents and had the smaller ones for their children, though to some extent they brought their dolls to serve in this capacity.

Most of the children came so far they had to take their dinners. In pleasant, warm weather they ate at the cubby-houses. They carried their food in tin pails, and often

entertained themselves by swapping portions with each other.

Of all the playtime resorts the favorite was the brook, just across the road from the schoolhouse. In winter they scampered over to it at recess and got bits of ice which they would smuggle into the schoolroom and secrete and nibble at on the sly. In summer they waded and splashed in the shallows of the stream and caught pollywogs and minnows with their bare hands.

Perhaps the most striking use they ever made of the stream was to play at baptizing in it. The chief church of the town was of the Baptist denomination, and it was the custom to baptize converts in some convenient stream. When a ceremony was to take place, the minister and convert, both in black robes, walked down into the stream, while the rest of the congregation clustered on the shore, singing: —

> "On Jordan's stormy bank I stand
> And cast a wistful eye
> To Canaan's fair and happy land,
> Where my possessions lie."

Then the minister took hold of his companion and said, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

With these words he laid the convert over backward into the water. If it was winter and the stream was frozen,

a passage was cut through the ice from the shore into deep enough water to do the baptizing thoroughly. To persons unfamiliar with such customs this may sound rude and strange, but to most in that vicinity the ceremony was as impressive as it was interesting.

The children in their play copied all the details of the baptism, very closely, except that the girl who acted as convert was not immersed in the water, but only dabbled a little.

In the meadow at recess

IV

LATER CHARACTERISTICS, 1860 TO 1900

A TYPICAL country school of this comparatively recent period was that at a small outlying hamlet which I shall call Riverbend. One of its attendants was Charlie Smithson. He began to go regularly before he had reached his fifth birthday. On the first occasion that he went to school he was escorted thither by an older brother.

The little brick schoolhouse was only a five-minutes' walk from their home, if they went straight there without loitering. This morning they were early enough to play for a while with the other children in the schoolyard. But presently the bell rang. A tremor of alarm ran through Charlie's breast. The clangor of the bell filled him with fear, and the open schoolhouse door looked ominous. He turned away and began to kick up the dust in all haste on his way toward home. His older brother was shocked at this disregard of the necessity of getting an education. He promptly gave chase, caught the runaway, and dragged him back to the schoolhouse.

Charlie found it not so bad after all when he was once

inside, and in a few days he was as willing to attend as any of the other children. His mother always brushed his

A schoolboy

hair and slicked him up before he started, and was careful that he should start on time. He was very confidential with her when she was getting him ready, especially if

they were alone together and not too hurried. He even told her, once, of the bad words some of the big boys used.

"Those are not nice," was her comment. "You won't use them, will you?"

He looked up into her face and replied with an honest "No."

The small children were sent more to relieve their mothers than for study, and for the first year Charlie had not much to do. He came out on the floor twice each day to learn his letters from some big white cards that had pictures on them; he listened to the others, and he was allowed to play with a fascinating counting-frame made of wires strung with blue, black, yellow, and green wooden beads. Sometimes the teacher let him lie down

The Riverbend schoolhouse

on the bench, with her shawl under his head for a pillow, and go to sleep; and once he fell off on the floor. The shock made him awake with a sudden start.

There were now three terms in the school year — a long winter term of twelve weeks and a spring and a fall term of ten weeks each. It was so much the custom for the teacher to be a woman that a man teacher in a primary school was looked on as a good deal of a curiosity. In all the time that Charlie attended the district school he only had one man teacher, and he taught only one winter term. Saturday had become a full holiday. "Boarding round" for the teacher had long ago been discontinued, and was now thought a "strange custom of the olden times."

Teachers, as a rule, were picked from among the young women of the home neighborhood. They were paid five or six dollars a week. In case a teacher came from another town, she boarded at a neighbor's in the schoolhouse vicinity at a weekly cost of two, two and a half, or possibly three dollars. The teacher, for the time being, was adopted as one of the family at her boarding-place. She would probably keep her own bedroom in order and help with the household work, at least to the extent of wiping the breakfast and supper dishes; and on such noons as the rest of the folks were gone, she got dinner for the hired man.

The schoolhouse at Riverbend was more roomy than

The commonest type of the country schoolhouse

those of most hamlets. It was also more substantially built, for the community that possessed a brick edifice was exceptional. Diminutive wooden buildings, painted white, were the rule. Riverbend schoolhouse stood on a low hill which was hardly more than a terrace. The little yard was hemmed in on three sides by a high and slivery board fence. In front was a white-painted quarter-board fence that, in its first days, had a good deal of style about it; but the boys rode that off in a very short time,

and, indeed, it was not long before boards, posts, and all were gone. The other fence was more formidable and withstood the ravages of time and the boys much longer. But successive climbing-overs, whackings, and the demand for see-saw boards made it disappear piecemeal, until there was left only one knotty cedar post, to which the committee-man hitched his horse when he called.

Sharpening his slate pencil

Among the advantages of having the school building of brick instead of wood was the fact that its outer walls furnished an excellent surface to sharpen slate pencils on. Once in a while there came a teacher to whose æsthetic eye the gray blotches which decorated the bricks about the entrance were not pleasing. Word of command was thereupon passed that the scholars should do their pencil sharpening instead on the heavy stone step before the door.

At a back corner of the schoolyard stood a rickety little building that served for a wood shed. It was unpainted and battered, and had a decrepit tendency to lean sideways, and always had a look of great age.

The interior of the schoolhouse consisted of a long entry, and beyond that the main room. At the rear of the latter were sixteen box desks. These desks were long enough to accommodate two pupils, but while Charlie Smithson went to school, the number of scholars was never so large but that each could have a whole desk to himself. The children left the district school younger than formerly to attend the grammar and high schools at the center. The rear seats in the room, which were monopolized by the largest and oldest scholars, were thought the most desirable ones. There was only a straight-up wall for a back, and the wind came in rather too freely at the cracks on cold days, but the remoteness from the teacher and the all-encompassing view of the room that the position afforded were sufficient compensations.

In the open space in front of the seats were the teacher's desk, two chairs, and the box stove, which sent a long reach of rusty pipe across the room. On the wall behind the teacher's desk was a long blackboard, and there were other blackboards between the north and south windows. Beneath these last, against the wall, ran a bench, on which the little scholars stood when they were at the board, and

which was liberally tattooed with imprints from the nails in the bottoms of their shoes.

A class in geography

The walls of the room were adorned with a geometrically figured paper that inclined to brownness and melancholy in its general tone. In places it had started to crack off, and in one or two spots was stained by leaks from the roof. The woodwork of the walls and doors was painted yellow with a graining to represent polished wood. The desks and benches were painted green — all except the tops of the desks, which were white. These soft pine desk-tops offered facilities for hand-carving and original decora-

tion, which had inspired the pupils to do a good deal of work on their once fair surface with their jack-knives and pencils. It was on the boys' side that the desks were most energetically cut up, the girls' genius running more to mild pencilings.

In the middle of the ceiling was a small square hole with a little door fitted to it, and known as "the ventilator." Originally there was a string attached to it by which it could be worked from below. However, strings are by nature perishable, and presently that string was no more. After that the boys, when they happened to think of it, would clamber up the unfinished wall in the entry

Going to school with the teacher

and pick a precarious way along the dark and still more unfinished loft and open the ventilator, or shut it, as the case might be. At the same time they usually called down a few remarks through the hole to the other scholars and threw some bits of plastering at them. At length, having properly adjusted the ventilator and thus insured the health of the school, the boys descended, and for some time afterward occupied themselves in freeing their clothes from the dust and cobwebs they had gathered.

In the way of art the schoolroom had three or four small chromos; in the way of inspiration, a dark portrait of Abraham Lincoln in a still darker frame. In the way of helps there was a somewhat antiquated wall map of the United States, and on the teacher's desk a small globe. The teacher's desk was quite modern. It was of black walnut, and it had a green oilcloth cover on its lid and a pretty balustrade at the back. The scholars admired it very much when it was first put in. Of course, use and age made it totter on its legs, and from time to time it was found necessary that it should undergo a course of gluings and wirings. These were administered by a village farmer. Many of the farmers numbered carpentering among their accomplishments, but this particular person, by reason of his special attainments, might fairly be designated the community's prize tinkerer. He could patch the roof; he could clean the stovepipe. He was

A schoolyard game of tag

appealed to when the door wouldn't lock, and he was appealed to when it wouldn't unlock. When the paint wore off the blackboard, he put on fresh. When a window-pane was broken, he got a new one and came down some evening with his putty, tools, and a lantern and put it in. He even took the clock in hand when it proved refractory. In short, if anything was the matter, or the teacher at any time was inspired with a new idea in the schoolroom economy, he was forthwith sent for.

In the corner of the room next to the stove was a big woodbox, unpainted and much battered, which, like most things in the world, came to pieces oftener than seemed strictly necessary. The stove, too, had its failings. There were days when it smoked, and at times its actions not only puzzled the scholars and the teacher, but the village carpenter as well. However, he would examine the stove some day after school, while he improved the opportunity, at the same time, to eat an apple. He would see that the joints in the long pipe were all right, and adjust the wires by which it was suspended from the ceiling. He might even bring a ladder from home, climb the school-house roof, and look down the chimney. After that the stove, if it had any conscience whatever, probably behaved better.

One of the boys among the pupils held the office of fire-tender and floor-sweeper right through the term. He

came early mornings to start the fire and have the room well warmed by schooltime, and once or twice a week he swept the floor. For this work he received one dollar at the end of the term, or possibly two dollars for a winter term. Not every boy had the genius to make the fire go

Starting the fire

well, for the ashes had to be poked just about right to make the draft good, and the stove door was broken in two pieces, and it required care to adjust it so it would in effect be whole and stay whole. Those hard-wood fires could be made tremendously hot on occasion. Once a certain boy who was suffering for amusement loaded the

stove as full of wood as it would hold just before school-time, that he might have the joy of witnessing the teacher's consternation when she came in and school began. Yes, the teacher observed the heat and the baked condition of the air, and sought out the boy who was answerable for the crime. She told him that, as he had such a liking for heat, perhaps he would be glad to stand by the stove and enjoy it. This suggestion was not one that filled him with delight, but the teacher would accept no excuse; and he was soon perspiring and repenting at the side of the stove. But he was a gritty fellow, and when, just before recess, the teacher asked how he liked it, he said, "First rate."

"Oh, well," was the teacher's response, "if you enjoy it so very much, you may spend your recess, too, by the stove."

Then the boy saw the unwisdom of his reply. However, the sentence was passed, and there was no help for it. That particular boy made no more hot fires.

Occasionally, one of the older lads would bring a little red pepper or brimstone and sprinkle it on the stove and by these means make the teacher and the pupils sneeze. The boys liked also to put snowballs on the stove to see them sizzle. This contributed to their happiness, perhaps, but it was not good for the stove, which as a result was badly cracked.

On the bench by the woodbox was set the water pail.

Beside it was the drinking utensil, sometimes a tin cup, sometimes a glass tumbler, and at one time a little custard cup. It was astonishing how many times a scholar could drink that custard cup full when he made the attempt. The small boy in the front seat would drink as much as he could hold, and then turn around and watch the progress of the water pail to observe if any one could exceed him. If the pail-bearer had a grudge against any particular one, or was humorously inclined, he might snatch the cup away before the drinker had taken more than a mouthful or two, or would give the cup a gentle but sudden tilt that inundated the drinker in a small way. The office of water-passer seemed to be quite desirable, and "May I pass the water?" was a question which required frequent answer from the teacher.

The water was brought from the nearest neighbor's. A big boy could get it alone, but usually two went to carry the pail. In the interregnums between the wearing out of one pail and the getting a new one, the scholars all raced over to "Uncle Elijah's" each recess to refresh themselves at the tub of running spring water which stood at his back door.

The clock has been mentioned. That was a recent innovation. For many years after the reign of the hour-glass and sundial the teachers had been accustomed to carry watches, but a schoolroom clock was a very recent

First day — waiting for the teacher

idea. This one was bought by a subscription that the scholars raised among their respective parents, and it was fastened to the wall over one of the blackboards, where the children could note how time flew, though it must be confessed they usually thought time did not fly at all, but on the contrary went very slowly.

Another village subscription supplied the schoolroom with a number of lamps, which, with their shining tin

reflectors, had been fastened up at intervals along the walls. These saved the trouble of bringing from the homes lamps and lanterns for illuminating purposes every time the villagers gathered for a lyceum, or a Christmas tree, or an evening prayer-meeting.

School began at nine o'clock, with reading a chapter from the New Testament. The scholars read in turn two verses each as long as the chapter lasted, and then put their arms on the desks, bowed their heads on them, and with the teacher repeated the Lord's Prayer in concert. Next came the clatter of getting out books and other working apparatus, and the asking of questions and making requests of the teacher. In a few minutes they had settled down to their tasks, and the teacher began hearing recitations. The A-B-C class was called first, then the class in the First Reader, then the class in the Second Reader, and so on. The teacher had on her desk a little bronze bell with a wooden handle, which she tinkled to call and dismiss the classes. Each class was expected to stand in a straight line, toeing a certain crack in the floor which possessed greater merits for a toe-line than its fellows because it had more width.

As the forenoon wore on, the smallest children were allowed to go out for what was called the "little recess," provided it was summer time. Just how they amused themselves it is not easy to say, for the youngest children

manage to have a very good time with the very simplest of accessories. North and east of the schoolhouse were apple orchards, where the scholars were privileged to help themselves to such fruit as they found lying on the ground.

Just outside the school yard was a great maple, and down the road a short distance was another nearly as large. In the spring these trees dropped quantities of their winged seeds into the grass. If you laid them on the hard dirt and stepped on them just right, they would burst with a faint pop. A child dearly loves a pop, be it great or small,

Cubbyhouse dolls

and will expend a good deal of time and ingenuity devising means whereby he can make things explode and

rejoice his soul with the sound produced — the more violent, the better.

There was one period when nearly every boy had an empty tin can with a string run through the bottom and fastened to a stick. This contrivance, when its possessor whirled it about his head, made the most horrible noise that can be imagined. No one except the boys could stand the racket thus produced, but they gloated over it. Discordant sounds never disturbed their sense of harmony.

One boy in the school was so organized that he could throw his thumbs out of joint, at the same time producing a quite perceptible cracking sound. He was looked up to as an authority and genius in the matter of poppings and crackings. He could also, by opening his mouth and rapping on his head with his knuckles, produce a dubious and hollow sound that would make one think his head was nearly empty. Perhaps it was!

A paper bag blown full of air and crushed made a delightfully loud explosion, but these bags seldom found their way to the schoolhouse. The best poppers within reach were large leaves, which were laid across a circle made by the thumb and forefinger of the left hand and slapped with the palm of the right. The girls could make very pretty wreaths of the maple leaves, weaving them together by means of their long stems. Dandelions in

A hard sum

the season were a source of amusement. "I'm going to see whether my mother wants me or not," says Jenny. She draws in a full breath and blows very hard at the white dandelion head held before her pursed lips. If all the seeds are blown away, she knows her mother does want her; but if any remain, it is settled that she is not then needed. The long, hollow dandelion stems, if held in the mouth and split slowly with the tongue, curled in two very neat and tight rolls. When shaken out, these formed spirals that, hung over the ears, made quite enticing earrings.

Another useful flower was the buttercup. It was an excellent medium by which to determine the important question whether one loved butter or not. Just hold it under Jenny's or Johnny's chin, and if you see a yellow reflection from its burnished petals, that is a sure sign that he or she loves butter.

Beside the road, near by, were some great coarse burdock plants. The green and purple burs could be stuck together into very neat baskets. Then there was a sturdy dooryard plant, the mallow, whose round, flat seeds were called by the children "cheeses," and which were considered quite good eating. Sorrel leaves and clover blossoms were other sources of food supply.

Back of the schoolhouse was a wide meadow where the children out at "little recess" chased the butterflies with

their straw hats, and gathered bouquets of the flowers that grew among the grasses. The best of all the sources of pleasure anywhere near was a little brook that ran along the borders of the meadow. There were endless possibilities of fun in that bit of water. The children could paddle in it, they could sail things on it, they could wet up their mud pies, and they could build a dam that would make it overflow its banks. In winter, if the season fa-

A drink from a stream on the way home from school

vored, the brook filled two or three of the meadow hollows. These, when frozen over, made excellent skating ground. The scholars were often on the ice before it was fairly safe. There was a pleasurable excitement to the venturesome ones in sliding on a "bender." A bender was made by sliding across weak ice which cracked as you slid. The longer the sliding was continued, the more the ice sagged beneath each passing weight; and the more it bent, the greater waxed the excitement. Finally, some one broke through and got his feet wet, and then the crowd all went up to the schoolhouse satisfied.

In warm weather, when the whole school came out for the "big recess," the favorite game was ball. This was more particularly a boy's game, though the girls played too, sometimes. After the grass was cut they liked to have their ball game in the meadow, but for the most part they contented themselves with the dusty roadway. Playing horse was in high esteem, and at times even the charms of the ball game paled before the delights of racing, and every child carried around ten or fifteen feet of string in his or her pocket. There were all kinds of horses, from "Stick-in-the-Mud" to "Maud S"; from the trained circus-horse to the wild horses of the plains. The scholars drove each other to school, and they drove each other home, and raced at every opportunity between whiles.

"Jail" was another game played. The woodhouse

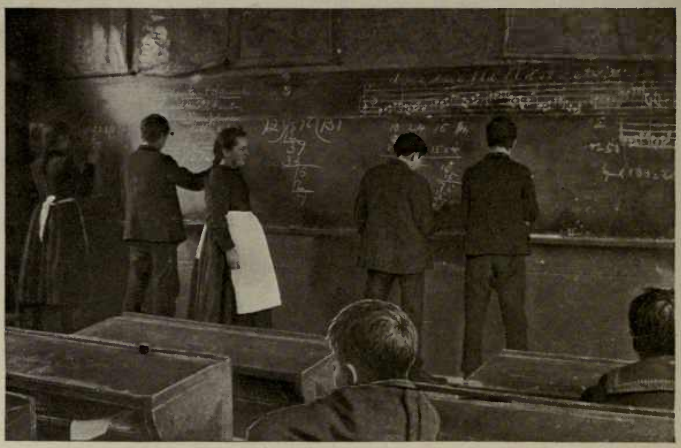
served as a prison, and the jailor caught the prisoners running, and in imagination he shut them up there; but as the woodhouse had no door, it was necessary that those caught should agree not to break out. "Bear" was played in something the same way. The woodhouse was the bear's den, and thence he issued forth and captured the others. In the fall great piles of fallen leaves were raked together, and the "bear" was covered up in them. The school gathered around the heap, and then the "bear" sprang out with terrible growls and a grand scattering of leaves, and chased whichever of the children came handiest.

In winter, besides sliding and skating, there was a good deal of desultory snowballing. Sometimes the snowballing went far beyond the bounds of gentleness or mischief, and the white missiles were hurled in swift anger and there were fights, and faces were washed, and the vanquished were ducked in the snowbanks. This was not a serious matter to the big boys, but the little fellows had some hard experiences. Let some great rough boy catch a little one and proceed to jam him into a drift, or let the big fellow chase the small one with a threatening snowball — there will be few occasions in all the trembling, gasping little lad's after-life when he will suffer such terror. At the time Charlie Smithson first went to school there was one big Irish boy by the name of Jim Londergrass

who acted as a protector to the small children. He was a most good-natured fellow, and he would allow the boys to throw snow at him and knock him about as much as they pleased; but if any of them were rough with a little one, they heard from him very quickly. Jim left school in a year or two and went away to work. Charlie has never heard from him since, but Jim has always been treasured in his memory as a true knight and hero.

The youngest scholar

At times the boys divided into sides and had pitched battles with their snowballs. Once they built a snow fort and planned for a fight that was to be particularly grand. Some of the boys prepared frozen snowballs for the occasion. Luckily, a thaw set in which



Doing arithmetic examples

laid the fort in ruins, and this desperate battle was not fought.

After the morning recess the several classes in arithmetic recited. All but the very highest schoolbooks were illustrated quite fully, even the arithmetics; and each book had a picture on its board covers. When reciting in mathematics, the scholars stood a part of the time in line and answered questions and repeated rules, and a part of the time "did examples on the board."

There was one teacher who kept Charlie Smithson on the multiplication table a whole term, in spite of the fact that he told her he was much beyond that. He got so he could say it over frontward and backward, beginning

at either end or in the middle, and he frequently covered one of the small blackboards with it written out, from $2 \times 1 = 2$ to $12 \times 12 = 144$.

Charlie's most serious trouble with arithmetic came when he met with long division. For several days he studied the new problems and attempted them on his slate, but they seemed hopelessly entangled. A boy from a neighboring town visited school about that time, and, though no older than Charlie, it was said he could do examples in long division. Charlie regarded him as a prodigy, and sank in deeper gloom. But one day light burst on his mind, and after that he could only wonder what it was that had puzzled him.

All the children struck snags of some sort in their arithmetic. Once a class was doing examples at the blackboard, and the teacher tested their capacity by giving them a few problems not in the book. Among the rest was this: —

"How many years have passed since our forefathers landed at Plymouth?"

Most of the children put down their dates, and there was a sharp rattle and scraping of crayons as they each hurried to get the answer as near first as might be. Soon most of them had finished, and some had the right answer and some had not.

There was one little girl, however, with her nose to the

blackboard, and standing first on one foot and then on the other, who was making no progress. She had the date 1620 written down and under it a figure 4, and that was all.

"Well, Katy," said the teacher, "what does the one thousand six hundred and twenty stand for?"

"That was when they landed," was Katy's reply.

"Very good," responded the teacher; "but the 4 — what is that for?"

"That," said Katy, fingering her chalk nervously, "is for our four fathers; but I don't know whether to multiply or divide."

Sometimes the whole school joined in a mental arithmetic exercise. The teacher would say, "Add two and two; multiply by four; take away six; divide by five," etc., and after a while ask, "Now, how many of you have the answer?"

Up would go the hands of those who had been able to follow the processes, or thought they had, and the teacher would call on some one for the answer. This exercise was considered very exciting and interesting.

The afternoon began with another hearing of the reading classes; then followed the class in grammar, one in history, and the afternoon closed with the geography classes. In the geography lessons the children often drew maps on the boards. Sometimes they drew them off-

hand, and sometimes they used straight-lined diagrams to help them make what they drew more like the real things.

When Charlie got his first new geography book, and the class was organized, he went at the study with great energy and even took his book home. On the morning

A New England academy

of the day they were to recite the first lesson, he informed the teacher that he had studied his geography over five times the night before. The teacher rewarded this assiduity by letting him stand at the head of the class, although he was one of its smallest members; but, to his surprise, in spite of all his studying, not a single question could he answer. He had simply read the words of his lesson,

and had not attempted to fix in his mind the ideas. Next day, from a humble position at the foot of the class, he did much better.

A quarter of an hour before the morning recess, the writing books, which the teacher kept in her desk, were distributed, and the children got out their pens and uncorked their ink bottles, and proceeded to copy line after line of the mottoes at the head of each page. The smallest pupils exercised their ingenuity in making straight and curved lines with a lead pencil, or in tracing over the blue lines of printed copy, while the conscientious older ones gave their minds to putting in the flourishes and the shading just right. Meanwhile the teacher walked about and kept lead pencils sharpened, gave advice as to what had best be done when a bad blot was made, or a page filled out ahead of time, and now and then sat down by a scholar and showed just how a particular bit should be written. The teacher usually had the children sit in a certain posture, and tried to have them take an easier position with their fingers than the stubby grip on pen or pencil that seemed to come natural.

Occasionally, drawing was taught in the school, and every child had a brown-leaved drawing-book of the same oblong shape as the writing-books. On each leaf, at one side, were patterns to copy, with some printed matter explaining how it was to be done. First came straight

Sharpening one of the children's pencils

lines and squares and circles, and gradually more complicated forms, solid bodies, vases, and flowers. In the book Charlie used, the final masterpiece was a bit of potato top in blossom. Potato plants he had always thought very homely as he saw them growing in the fields, but here it seemed really a thing of beauty.

Many of the teachers had a few moments of gymnastics in school each session. The pupils stood by their desks to go through the various movements, and in the parts where there was stamping or hand-clapping, considerable enthusiasm was aroused in seeing how much noise could be made. In the bendings backward, forward, or sideways there was always interest in determining just how far one could go, even though it endangered one's equilibrium; and in the motions which called for a clenched fist there were those whose imaginations were stimulated to fancy themselves engaged in a pugilistic encounter. Such were particularly exhilarated when their fists came into semiaccidental encounter with a neighbor.

Singing found frequent place in the school exercises when the teacher was herself gifted in that way. *Gospel Hymns* was the favorite book for selections on such occasions. Whatever the musical lacks of the performance were, the volume of sound could always be depended on to be fully up to the mark, when the song had a lively and easily caught movement.

Teachers sometimes read to the scholars a little each day, or for an hour or so on Friday afternoons. One of Charlie's teachers read them an exciting book about Indians and hunters, and for that reason Charlie thought her about the best teacher that ever was. The book was so fascinating that the scholars would gladly stay in at recess to hear it read.

Punishments, as a whole, had become much milder

A rainy-day school at home

than in the old days, and many teachers got along without any punishments that involved bodily pain or made the child a spectacle of supposed shame to his fellows. "Thrashings" were no more, but once in a great while a teacher would resort to feruling. The front seats and standing room on the floor were reserved for those who misbehaved, and there were occasions when it seemed necessary to keep a child in at recess or after school.

There was a great difference in teachers. Some were in earnest and did careful, faithful work, but now and then there was one who was careless, and more interested in her own ease than in the scholars' progress. But a very poor teacher was not apt to stay long. The pupils were sure to report at home what she did and said, and when the tide of public sentiment set strongly against her, she had to leave.

The garments the children wore were in patterns and materials much more varied than in times past, yet simpler than at present. The girls' waists, as compared with the modern fashion, were quite tight-fitting. Their stockings for a decade or more after the civil war were striped in narrow horizontal bars, or white, though the latter were usually reserved for Sundays and dress-up occasions. Later, black stockings became the rule. The girls wore their hair short until about the age of ten, and held it back from the forehead with a pliant, semi-

circular comb, or with a pretty ribbon an inch or so wide that passed from the back of the neck to the top of the head, where it was tied in a bow.

Many of the boys and some of the girls inherited their elders' outgrown or worn-out clothes, which needed only a little adjusting or making over to fit them for further duty. Short trousers began to come into vogue about 1880, but the country folk were inclined to regard them as a town affectation not at all desirable for comfort or beauty, and a number of years passed before they were generally adopted. Hats, both straw and felt, were the common head covering for the boys, with roomy ear-lapped caps for winter, but at length close-fitting little caps became almost universal. At one time the boys used to have copper-toed and red-topped boots for winter wear, but, later, shoes and rubbers came into more general use. In summer most of the boys went barefoot, and in the driest times it was agreeable to the boy to follow along the middle of the road on his way to school, stubbing up as big a cloud of dust as he knew how. Once in a while a girl went to school barefoot, but that was not the rule.

Visitors were infrequent. When they did come, the scholars seemed to think they would bear watching — at least they did watch them. The most important visitor was the chairman of the school committee. While he was there, the classes were all called out to give him

an idea of the progress they were making. One thing he was sure to do in the reading lessons, after a child had read, was to ask, "Now what was it those people did whom you were reading about?"

The class in the Fifth Reader

The boy turned to his book and started to repeat the words in the same sing-song manner as before.

"No, no," said the committee-man, "shut your book, and tell me what they did."

That accomplished, he would try to get the boy to read conversationally, instead of sing-song, but his success

was not flattering. Just before the committee-man left, the scholars shut up their books and sat up straight, while the visitor rose, put his hands behind his back, and made some "remarks" to them. These were to the purport that they should be tidy, and keep the room neat, and that it would be a great help to success in after-life to have good lessons and to learn to behave well.

The one grand occasion of the term was "examination day." The schoolroom was swept out very clean the preceding night, or perhaps well scrubbed with soap and water, so that a slight odor of soapiness and sense of dampness lingered all through the following day. The morning session was a short one, that the children might have plenty of time to eat dinner and dress themselves in their "Sunday-go-to-meetin's." They came in the afternoon very spick and span. Chairs were brought in from the neighbors', and a little mild play indulged in before the bell rang to call them indoors. Not much was done until the audience began to arrive, and an air of expectancy and solemnity brooded over the schoolroom. Women and very small children were the only visitors, usually, and it was before them that the scholars were called out to recite such things as they knew best, and possibly to speak a few pieces and read compositions. The visitors were further entertained by being allowed to examine the pupil's writing-books, and to look through the school register,

wherein each child's regularity of attendance was indicated, and where were put down the names of such callers as had been to the school. By and by there was a recess, where, of necessity, the play was not very vigorous, because the children all had their best things on, in which they were less comfortable and free than usual, and which they felt under obligation to keep slick and clean. When school was finally dismissed for good and the scholars were out of doors, they rejoiced in a pandemonium of shoutings and waving of hats.

They rejoiced because the school term had come to an end; and yet what happier experiences does life bring than in the care-free days one spends in a Country School?

The good boy who is allowed to study out of doors

V

HOW THE SCHOLARS THINK AND WRITE

HUMOR, it is said, consists in the unexpectedness of an idea or expression. Even a good joke heard a second time has lost something of its flavor; and a popular bit of slang, which originally may have had an agreeable tang about it, wearies and disturbs by its frequent repetition.

The thoughts of a child continually wander aside from the routine paths to which the minds of its elders are apt to confine themselves, and hence its speech and action are full of unconscious humor. Indeed, the humor must be unconscious to have any charm, for the child who tries to be funny is certain to make a dismal failure of it. Children are readily enkindled with interest and enthusiasm, and their thought at such times is often very happy and luminous. It many times runs far astray, but that does not make it less interesting. Nor is a wrong answer always indicative of dulness or poor teaching. It is as frequently due to brightness and originality.

The child, when it begins to absorb our spoken language, finds the medley of sounds which it encounters, with all

their different meanings, bewildering, and, as is to be expected, often uses one word instead of another which to some degree resembles it. Children jump to conclusions even more frequently than grown-up people do — which is saying a good deal — and they at times make a wild use of disconnected ideas that they have chanced to pick up; but they at other times will make an explanation with a simplicity and patness that might well move the most learned to envy.

In writing, children get badly entangled by the words which are not spelled as pronounced. They have a strong inclination to spell phonetically, but those queerly con-

Writing

structed words they have learned haunt their minds and they sometimes spell one of the simple words the long way. Punctuation is likewise a trouble to them. Usually they put in an occasional period, and may even venture to use a comma, but they are sparing in the use of both, and are inclined to avoid other marks altogether. Capitals are another disturbing element to the limpid flow of the child's thought when writing. Children, however, are pretty sure to start with a capital and begin most sentences with one. A few are sprinkled in promiscuously, and if some are misplaced, others are lacking elsewhere, so that the average is about right. A scientific division of the words which fall last on the lines the child is writing and still need room, is understood by few. Most put in

The looking-glass in the entry

a hyphen after the final letter the line will contain, with entire independence of syllables, and begin the next line where they left off. Others avoid the dilemma by leaving a margin along the right border of the page, so that long words can run over into that without necessity for division. Still others turn such words downward along the edge till written out in a cramped fulness.

The scholars are most entertaining and do their best when writing on a subject which engages their personal feeling and interest — something which is a part of their own experience and observation. What they write of things far off is, as a rule, dry and stiff. Given such topics the children express themselves more correctly than when writing of things about home — on the same principle that one does not stumble so often when walking sedately as when in enthusiastic haste. But culture comes from love of learning, not from present correctness of expression, and the children undoubtedly gain far more in putting on paper what they have learned by sight and hearing than in writing out what they have gained from books.

In the preceding chapter the ways of a rustic school in the little village of Riverbend were described. At this school on Friday afternoon, the final session of the week, the usual routine was abandoned for something more entertaining. On one such occasion the teacher read

aloud to her scholars Longfellow's poem, "The Building of the Ship," and the children listened attentively. They seemed to enjoy the story and the music of the poetry thoroughly.

The second class in reading

When the teacher finished reading, she distributed pencils and paper and said, "Now you may write the four lines of the poem that I will repeat to you; and I will read them very slowly one line at a time: —

> "Thou, too, sail on, O ship of State!
> Sail on, O Union, strong and great!
> We know what Master laid thy keel,
> What Workman wrought thy ribs of steel."

The slow ones had not yet done writing when the teacher noticed that May Tyler's hand was up, and gave her leave to speak.

"Sometimes" — the little girl began, and then letting her eyes wander about among the other scholars, lost the thread of her intended remark.

"What is it, 'sometimes'?" questioned the teacher.

"Sometimes you let us draw a picture to go with what we write," was May's response.

"And would you like to draw a picture to go with what you have written to-day?" said the teacher.

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed May and half a dozen of the others eagerly.

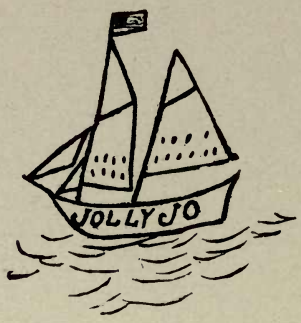
"Well," the teacher said, doubtfully, "I don't know that I object, if you think you can do it."

The children were sure they could, and the teacher gave them fresh slips of paper. She was curious to see what they would make out of the subject. A "ship of state" seemed to her to offer no chance for a picture. But the scholars bent intently to their task, and showed no signs of lack of inspiration.

Now a hand went up. It was Tommy Halpin's. Tommy was one of the smaller children who sat on the front seats. His eyes were still on the paper which contained his picture. When the teacher asked him what he wanted, Tommy said, "Can I put a name on my ship?"

"Yes," the teacher replied, and Tommy printed it right on, and then, forgetting in his enthusiasm to ask permission, came trotting across the floor to show his finished drawing to the teacher.

She laughed a little when she saw Tommy's "ship of state," but she told him he had made a very good drawing.



Tommy's ship

The vessel in his picture looked like a small two-masted sailboat, and its name, JOLLY JO, printed in mammoth letters that practically covered one side from stem to stern, seemed very well suited to such a craft.

The ships of state drawn by the other children were of the same mild character, and there was not a war ship in the lot. May Tyler, who had proposed making the pictures, called her ship the BLUEBELL. She was the last to finish; for she drew as a background a long mountain range, with the sun coming up over it. Hers was an open boat without a deck, but she explained she had to draw it that way in order to show its "ribs of steel," which she had made very plain and black.

The teacher thought the drawings spirited in their way; but she was not altogether pleased to have the ship

of state appear so uniformly as a pleasure craft, and she took pains to explain to the children the real meaning of the extract they had written. In concluding she had each pupil draw a United States flag on their vessels, and this established a certain relationship with the sentiment of the verse the picture illustrated, though they were still more humorous than impressive.

An illustration by one of the little girls

What I have related of this Friday afternoon was characteristic of most of the other Friday afternoons, and in the pages which follow I give various examples of the children's off-hand writing and illustrating, and a list of definitions garnered from their spelling lessons.

DEFINITIONS

A dwarf is one that holds up a lady's train.

Sister: If there was a girl and she lived at your house and she was your mother's daughter, then she would be your sister.

Missionary: One who makes hats. One who surveys land.

The missionaries went to invert the Indians.

Remember means to know afterwards what you know now.

Some kinds of poultry are chickens, hens, and lambs.

A territory is a small place down in a valley.

Cutlery is knives, forks, and sewing-machines.

Work is keeping at something all the time.

Trouble is having something that you don't like.

History is studying an examination.

Crying is shidding tears.

News is to hear something that we have not heared before.

Scholars are children studying.

Work is to help the poor; that is the best of work.

A hillside schoolhouse

If there was a poor old lady living alone, it would be *kindness* to do her work.

History is a study of the United States.

History is a history telling about olden times.

History tells about wars.

History is a book that the scholars study about.

News is to here things.

News is when anything new happens.

To be contented is to have everything you want.

Contented means to be happy wherever you are.

Contented is when you have enough.

You are *contented* when you are asleep.

To cry is to feel very bad.

Work means to do something hard.

Bussy is when you have a lot of work to do.

A laugh is when you are happy.

Vegitables are all kinds of fruit.

The diameter of the earth was Noah's dove.

Colors are different shades.

Study is to learn.

Arithmetic is to do different sums.

Arithmetic is used to trade with.

Fire is very hot and the color of red.

A picture is to repersent anything.

A picture is something that looks like what it was drawn from.

A picture is something to look at.

Writeing is made of ink and lead.

Write is to talk with letters.

Paper is to right.

Reading is talking.

An animal is something that has 4 or more legs.

An animal is a cow who gives milk.

Animals are made of flesh and bones.

Dirt is something we could not live without.

An oasis is a desert place.

An oasis is a flock of trees in a desert.

A gizzard is where the gravel goes.

A gizzard is a kind of fowl.

Bacon is a streak of lean and fat.

Shoulder is the joints of animals which holds them up.

A favor is to do something good.

Henpecked means to be governed by your wife.

Flowers are a vegitable.

Favor is a bottle of water that smells good.

Favor means when you tell some one to go after something and they go. The one that asks the boy is the one who does the favor.

Favor is when a boy does something for his mother.

A flag is what you wave.

Metal is a stone.

Metal is something good to wear.

The Primer class

A city is a large place.

A city is a lot of buildings.

A city is a place where they sell groceries.

A city is a place where they sell grain for horses and cows.

Desire means to know everything.

Velvet means the fur on a cat's ear.

Whisker means a hair on a cat's mouth.

Noiseless means to make a little noise.

Spkled means little dogs.

Toothsome means hard.

Almonds are a kind of pudding.

Occupations of people in Hadley: Farming, grinding, making broomes, keep store, keep postoffice, make whips, make candy, they bild houses, they eat, they drink.

Luncheon means to eat between meals.

Feast means to have a good deal.

Sky is made up of fog.

The sky is where the moon and sun is.

Air is a good deal like weather.

Air is wind.

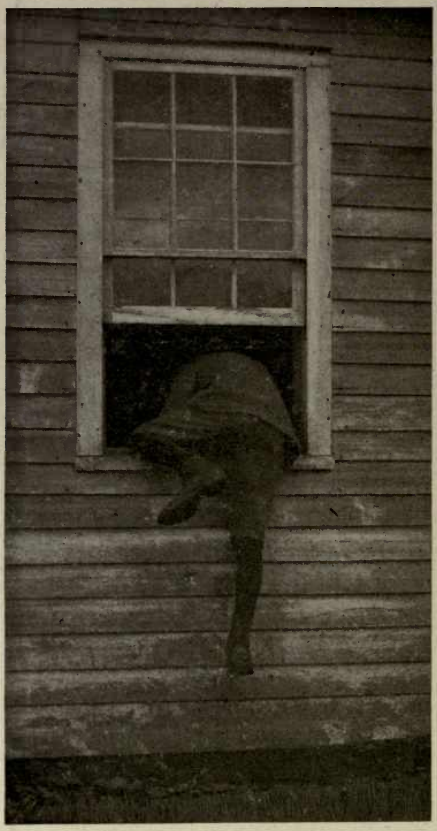
Air is what you breave.

Eat is to make your jaws go.

Eat means the digestion of food.

To eat is to swallow anything.

To eat is to satisfy your appetite.



When the door is locked

Home is the place of your parents.

Home is you's house.

Calendars are made of paper and numbers.

Calendars are used in telling how warm and cold it is.

Fruits is a bige apples is a red and it is about bigs as a pair that is sweet.

A fruit is something that comes on a tree.

A whip is a stick and a lash on the end of it.

A whip is something good to lick horses with.

A mountain is lots of trees.

A mountain is a big pile of dirt.

Money is a round and has a sign on it.

Money is to by things with.

Sky is clouds.

Sky is air.

Sky is something that the rain falls out of.

Weather is rain or shine.

Eat means your mouth.

Play means when you are running around and hiding behind trees and houses.

Roasts is a part of a cow.

The cattle products of South America are hides, tallow, and silver.

They have stews at boarding-houses.

Government is the governor.

Fiercely is very uggly.

Ditches is a hole.

Destroy means to have a book tored up.

Pitfalls means to pitty anybody.

Suddenly meanes that think she will die.

Pounces means to jump up on a cat or anything.

The number of people on the earth was the reason for its being flattened at the poles.

Greedy means to eat some food away from another.

Eager is to watch and see what another eats.

Ravenous means hurry.

Extravigrant means to use all the money you can.

Lonesome means to have somebody gone away.

Carelessly means to lose a child.

Invitation means to go to a house to eat.

Business-like is a man that works.

Bordered is to have everything in.

Daughter is a man's girl.

Enter is to go to the school house.

Unlike is to be puplite to anybody.

A ball is made out of leather and stuffins.

A bell is used to commence school with.

Dictionary is where they keep all the words people don't know.

Carelessly is not to be careless.

The almanac is to look up things with.

The almanac tells the date of the year.

Earth is ground.

A ball is to through.

Pair is to eat.

Pare is shoes.

A book is a thing that has a stiff cover.

A bill is when you owe somebody.

Paint is something red.

Paint is a yellow color.

The sun is a thing that shines in my eyes.

A blotter is some ink and is on the paper.

Income is to come in.

Income means to go to a house.

Helping a little one on with her things

Passion means to pass a car.

Trading is to biy things.

An elf is a small animal.

A sheaf is any bundle.

Huge means to feel bad.

Leaf is any thin piece.

A bell is something to ring made of tin and iron.

Almanac is a book with pictures in it.

The almanac shows us when it is going to rain and when there is going to be a knew moon.

Pair is a fruit that grows on a tall tree.

CONFESSIONS OF A BAD BOY WHO REFORMED

I was a cureious little boy when I first went to school I dident like to go anyway. I would torment the teacher the worst kind and I would do every thing that she dident want me to do and if she wanted me to do a thing I wouldent do it and she got so mad with me she would shut me up in the closit but that dident do no good. I would get out of the window and go home. when I got up to read I would say whatever came into my mind and she would send me to my seat. and I would sit and laugh over it like a monkey but she thought she would try a new rule to be sure. she would give me a good whipping with the ruelar when I dident mind. that I got use to after a while and didient mind it when I came to school

in the winter time I would bring snow in on my feat she would tell me to go back out. I was so cold I dident want to and she would give me a good shaking and I liked it beaucause it warmed me up. the next teacher we got was better than the first one she I liked very much she would give a card every night when I went home and she said I was the best boy in school. I carraid my dinner to school. there was a big tree near the school house us boys would get up in the tree to eat our dinners one of the boys got out to far on the limb and it broke and he fell but he loged on a nother limb down a little ways.

The teacher gives one of the boys a shaking
(*Drawn by the boy*)

AUTHER
H. J. H.

POETRY

Composed on the 26th day of February.

We heard
A blue bird
This morning
As a warning
That spring is near
And is all most here.

A LETTER

Harry made a tobogain Sataday. and we had som slides it was very very coald and it sleud so that we went down the hill backwards.

We have a new hierd man his name is Robert he seams a verry good man so far.

I can scate alone but I fall down a good many times. We scate on a pond opersite the male box.

It snowed yesterday and rained hard in the night. and so we have a crust and the trees look like glass ones and they look so graceful and pretty i carnt posably discrib them. every thing is beautyful.

We go to school now and the week slips by so fast that we find sataday in the middle of the week so we should think. We doant find much time to waist.

To day I had to see how many seconds it took me to add 8+9+5+4+8+7+8+9+8+7+6+6+7+8+9. it took me 30. but I did not get it wright.

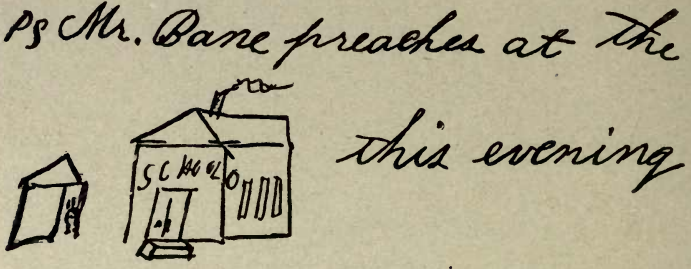
Harry choped of a piece of a log of slipery elm yesterday and we pealed it and ate some.

Aunt Sahra is a bed with a headake. I have bin sowing on a soing machine.

Laura.

P.S. this is the largest letter I ever rote.

P.S. You did not say any thing about my last letter so i think it was rite.



OUT CAMPING. — A STORY

Once there was a boy who was very rich he become so rich he bought the world. One day he was out camping he throught he would go out f hishing so he got in one of the boats. he saw some whales down to the lower end of the river so he throught he would catch one, so

rowed down to them. be four he got down there one came and upset the boat, and he swollow him and the boat floated down the river. so one day his mother came down to the camp, so she went out in the boat and throught she would catch one and she caught one and put it in the boat it eat her up and the boat floated down the river into the ocen

COMPOSITIONS

Jack Frost

Jack frost never comes out in the summer. But in the winter he is out every day then he bit our toes and finger. When he is here we can have a lot of fun here are some of the thing that we can do when he is here sligh down hill, make snow balls, get sleight ride, get our feet wet. But when he is gone we can have a lot of fruit, these are some of the fruits pears apples cherry graps. We can not have any of thoes thing in the winter. In the winter time we have more fun than in the summer. We can go scaking on the rivers. Some times Jack Frost does not freez the water hard enought so we go into the water and get wet. Jack Frost makes our feet wet so when we take off our shoes they stick to our feet and so when he get up in the morning we have a hard time geting them on.

A schoolboy

Trees

Trees grow in the ground. A tree is tall, it bears a good many kinds of friut one is apples another is pears. My apples trees do not bear any fruit, but they are yoused for shad trees and to get the sap to use. Trees are very useful. In the fall the leaves of Maple turn into a pretty collor red that makes it look pretty. In the winter the leaves fall off of the trees and leav them bear. When the leaves fall off people rake them up, and use them for beding. In the spring the trees commence to leaf out. Trees look dead in the winter, and in the summer they do not look dead but bright and leaves on them. When trees are dead they have no leaves on them and do not bear any fruit, so people cut them down. Trees look pretty and bear fruit when they are alive, but when they are dead they do not look pretty or bear fruit. I think I have ritten quite enough so I think I had better stop.

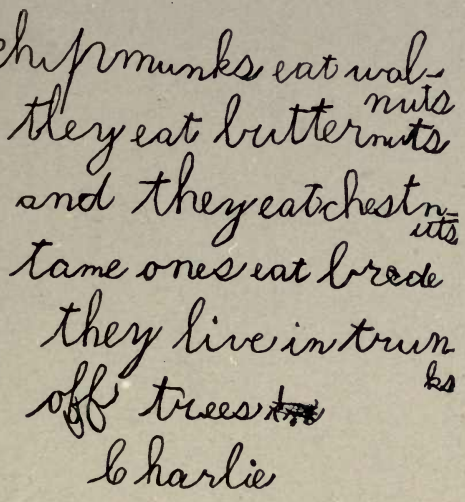
Chipmunks

A chipmunks are very prety. And thare are a graite menny of them. And they eat chestnuts and walnuts and butternuts. and they live in the woods i think I have seen one. they are striped. the huntters catch them. they store thare food away to eat in the winter. they are about as small as a good sized rat. we see them

The school on skates

in the fall. they live in an old roten trunks of trees. they never come out in the winter

I can not think of enny think elce so I will stop Mary Smith.


chipmunks eat wal-
they eat butternuts
and they eat chestnuts
tame ones eat bread
they live in trunks
off trees
Charlie

Facsimile of one of the youngest scholars' manuscripts

Fish

Fish are good to eat. They live in water in fresh water and salt water. in ponds brocks. In rivers lakes Atlantic Ocean to. We catch them with hooks and line. Fish swim with fins and tail to. Some have no eyes in caves. Sometimes fish eat other fish. Fish eat insects.

Going to School

I like to go to school. I like to study in my books. I am in the third reader and Arithmetic and Geogeraphy. the school is made of brick and we sing. My teacher dose haft to write songs on the boart and then we learn them and sing the song I have a little work to do at home. Be fore I go to school I have to wash my face and hands and change my dress and put on my hat and coat and start off for school. And when any body sayis enny sentes that has aint I poot it on the bord and leave it ther till night and then rase it. We have a tree a little awayes from the school house and it is a good tree to it is a tree that dose shade the hose nise. We have four girls in school nine boys in school. We have in school five black boards in school. the boards are about full every moning. the schoolers want to go to the boards and write ther words We draw at school every fridday. We have but one teacher. We have some floer seeds in the bed And I must tell about what is in the floer bed There are peonies poppies, sweet peaes, scarlet beanes, moring glories lark-spur, gladioli, holly, hocks.

And that is what we have got in the floer bed. And what we play at recess is Kings-land and squart-tag and stone-tag and wood-tag and hide and cop.

The perils of the early settlers

Mis Hap

As I was driveing in the corn-field to smooth off the field to plant.

I turn round to short and the horses turn around and round tell they tip the smoother up endways and I fell under it and the horses got fritting and ran home They was a nother man tried to stop them and his ran a way up to the barn

I haller whoa but they did not stop till they reach the barn. Then we came runing af the them. When they got to the barn they tried to get in the door. They did not get in the door the pepol in the house thought they was a team coming in the yard and they went to the door and saw the horses come full speed.

The peopl in the house wear scart but they ran out caught thores by the bridle. the swet ran off of one hores legs and I througt he was bleeding. I back the hores out of the barn and shith them up and took them down to the modow again.

THE END.

Great Funs at School

Our school begins at nine Oclock. We first have singing & then comes the lessons There aint but three boys in school larg enough to play ball so we generaly play Kingsland I live only about a quarter of a mile from the school house so I go home to diner. At reces in the afternoon now it is so hot that we do'nt do any thing but talk. In June our school lets out for a long vacation. Then in the fall the school begins again. & it is cooler so that we play hide & coop squat tag etc. Then the chestnuts begin to get ripe & our teacher gives us a day to go chestnuting. Then it begins to get cold & we hang around the stove to keep warm. Then the snow begins to come & we have great fun sliding down hil. There is a large hill in frunt of the school house & we go down so fast that it takes your breth away When it gets very cold & the ice begins to freze we skate up & down the pond like the wind. When it snows & covers the pond we take a shovel & broom & clean it off Then after a while it begins to get warm & the ice begins to get weak. And one day when we were skating the ice cracked like every thing & one of the boys got in but we did not stop skating becaus we thought it would soon be over & it was soon over & it was all slush & mud. And we made a raft and floated around in the water & had great fun.

After a while the water came up very high & the teacher had to come to school in a boat. & we had great fun catching flood wood The water came up so high that

The schoolhouse in flood-time

some of the houses were fluded But it did not last long & then it came around to hot wether again.

Vacation

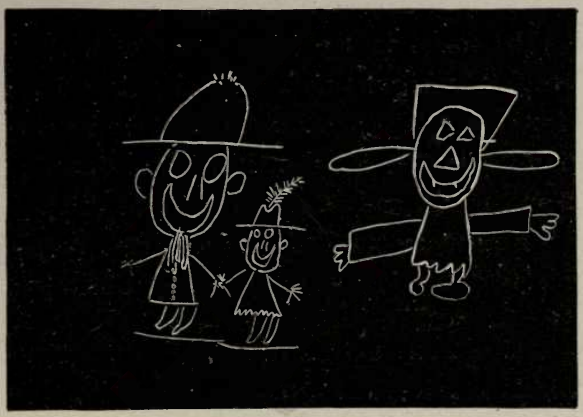
In vacation we have lots of fun and lots of works first comes the seeds to be sowed then the potatoes and corn to be planted. Then comes the weeding and hoeing to be done. I do not like to weed onions it is a tiresome job to be bending over all day and almost breaks my

back. 2nd picking strawberries is also a tiresome job mutch like weeding onions. But work is not all of the vacation there is some play such as playing base ball Hide-and-go-seek kingsland foot ball etc. Now playing base ball is a very good game but you are apt to get hurt such as spraining your finger smashing your teeth etc. the best of kings-land is the geting the one who is it on to the oposite side and pull his hair. foot ball is a very ruff

A hay field

game in which boys are hurt quite often. Next comes the haying we begin haying about the 22 of June that is our first haying first the grass is to be mowed then it is to be shook out then turned over a cuple of times then raked up then loaded into the wagon then tosed into the bay and it is done. Then comes the second hoeing not so hard as the first but hard enough for me. Then the second haying not as good a crop as the first and the hay is mad just as the first crop which I told you about. Then

comes the potatoes to be dug then picked up and put in to the cellar. Then the corn to be cut and then husked and carried to the barn then the stalks to be cut up and made ready for the cows to feed on during the winter. Then the other vegitables to be got into the cellar such as the squash pumpkin onions etc. But to take it away through I think I had rather have vacation than school.



Blackboard drawings: "a farmer, his little girl, and his wife"

VI

SCHOOLHOUSE ENTERTAINMENTS

IN the central villages of the country towns it is possible during the leisure of the winter months to get up social diversions that are quite grand. But to whatever dazzling height of attraction these may attain, I doubt if they ever have the charm and naturalness to be found in the schoolhouses of the outlying hamlets. The characteristic gathering is one where, aside from the enjoyment afforded by the meeting of neighbors in friendly converse, there is a programme including recitations, music, and possibly a dialogue. The items of such a programme are handled with more style in the larger places, but in the ornate town celebrations the individuality that glows from each participant in the schoolhouse merry-makings is apt to get smoothed out into mannerism.

Of course, in certain ways the isolation of an outlying hamlet is a handicap, and it is apt to be a source of regret to the inhabitants. They are largely dependent on themselves for diversion; and yet if this results in their putting forth extra efforts to make the local life pleasant and interesting, the isolation may be a blessing in disguise.

In the attempt to brighten the long winter evenings, there are various social gatherings at the homes; but the schoolhouse is the place of meeting on the more important occasions, and the children of the school furnish the backbone of these rustic festivities. The literary material on which the children draw for subjects is often artificial or commonplace; yet they themselves are so sure to be entertaining and original that you readily forget the respects in which their performance falls short of a technical ideal. They each have a piece to speak; and in addition to that, all of them together come out on the floor several times and form in rows with the teacher beside them, and sing such songs as they have learned. They depend a great deal on their teacher; for she picks out the verses for them to memorize, drills them, and when they stand before the

Trimming the Christmas tree

audience, she is near at hand ready to prompt when they forget the words.

The audience always takes special pleasure in listening to a spicy and picturesque dialogue; but space limitations and the difficulty of managing a lot of children, full of excitement over the glory of the occasion, make it unwise to attempt anything very elaborate. It is not, however, easy to find dialogues that will fit the need of the schoolhouse either in matter or manner. What is wanted is something short, requiring few actors, and having a homely quaintness of expression and of situations that shall be pleasant and natural from the child's point of view. Sometimes a dialogue from a book or magazine can be cut down and adapted; but the two little plays which follow were written for the occasions when they were acted, and they were produced with entire suc-

Speaking his piece

Schoolroom decoration

cess. By that I do not mean there was no blundering. The mistakes and accidents were half the fun, and were applauded as heartily as that which was done most cleverly. Whatever the lacks of the performers, the dialogues themselves are of a sort that seemed excellently suited to the place. A corner of the schoolroom was curtained off and fitted up in the rude likeness of a room in an old-fashioned farmhouse. At the back of the apartment was an open fireplace made of a drygoods box, with the inside roughly painted to imitate smoke-blackened bricks. Several ancient chairs were scattered about, and there was a cot-bed, a bureau, lamp, and clock. The first of the dialogues was acted at a Christmas celebration, the other on the evening of Washington's Birthday. The former was entitled

CHRISTMAS NIGHT

CHARACTERS

Santa Claus, with white beard and big fur coat.
Tommy } brothers, the first seven, and the second nine
Freddy } years, old.

Tommy (*pawing out the contents of a bureau drawer*). Well, I don't see where ma put those stockings. No, they ain't here.

Freddy. We'll have to make the old ones do, then.

I don't know what Santa Claus'll think of us for hanging up such things. See there, now! (*Runs his arm into the long stocking, and his fingers come out sprawling through a hole at the other end.*)

A hunt for stockings

Tommy. The presents that Santa Claus puts in'll all tumble out at the bottom. Here, you stop that, Freddy! You're tearing the hole bigger.

Freddy. We'll have to tie up that hole to make the stocking any good. Got any string, Tommy?

Tommy. I guess so. (*Pulls a lot of things out of his pockets and puts them on the bureau.*) Yes, there's some. Now you hold the stocking, and I'll tie it up.

Freddy (*as they do the tying*). Tommy, what do you say to stayin' up and ketchin' old Santa Claus just after he has come down the chimney and is filling our stockings?

Tommy. I don't believe we could do it. He doesn't come till twelve o'clock, and we'd get to sleep before then, even if we was to try our hardest to keep awake.

Freddy. I'll tell you how we can fix the business. There's the alarm-clock. Set it to go off at twelve, and that'll bring our eyes open in no time. We'll turn

Making ready for Santa Claus

the light down and go to bed with our clothes on, and so be all ready to pop out on the old fellow.

Tommy. Good for you, Freddy! That's just the thing. You hang up the stockings and put up the signs we made, and I'll wind the alarm. (*Freddy hangs the stockings on some nails at either side of the fireplace, and next to one pair of stockings adjusts a placard on which he has lettered his name, and next to the other pair a similar placard which bears Tommy's name. Meanwhile, Tommy winds the alarm.*)

Freddy. But what are we going to do with Santa Claus when we ketch him?

Tommy. I hadn't thought of that. We'll have to make some kind of an excuse, 'cause he might get mad.

Freddy. I know! We just want to find out if there really is a Santa Claus. We'll tell him what Sammy Tompkins said about there not being any Santa, and he'll say we did exactly right.

Tommy. That's so, I guess he will. Well, turn down the lamp and we'll go to bed. There, crawl in. Now, let's see who'll snore first. (*Both fall to imitating snoring and they laugh a little and kick about, but soon quiet into sleep.*)

Santa Claus. (*Comes in softly.*) All right. Everybody sleeping. Well, well, stockings all labelled. That's thoughtful. I don't need my spectacles to read this

lettering! (*Puts down his sack and from it fills the stockings. Just as he finishes doing this, the alarm goes off; that is, some one behind the curtain sets off a clock at the proper moment. Santa tumbles in great terror to the*

The boys go to bed

floor.) Great Cæsar's cats! what was that? In all the ten thousand years, more or less, that I've travelled up and down this old world, I've never heard anything like that. Must have been a new invention or an earthquake. (*Looks about fearfully.*)

Tommy. (*He has risen on his elbow and speaks in a whisper.*) There's Santa. He acts kind o' scared.

Freddy (*also in a whisper*). Now's our time, then!

Both Boys. (*They jump from the bed, dash across the floor, and grab Santa Claus by the shoulders.*) There, we've got you!

Caught

Santa Claus. Why, what's the matter? Hold on, hold on!

Tommy. Yes, we'll hold on. We've got you!

Santa Claus (*getting up*). Well, now, what are you boys after, anyway? What was that noise I heard?

Freddy. (*He hangs on to one of Santa's hands, while Tommy clings to the other.*) Oh, that was nothin'. It was just one of these little alarm-clocks to wake up by.

Santa Claus. Was that all? I thought the earth had cracked and was going to pieces. But what has got into you boys to come pitching on to me the way you did?

Tommy. Why, we just wanted to know if there was a

Santa Claus or not. That's all. Sammy Tompkins said there wa'n't. But we knew there was.

Santa Claus. Of course there is. Don't you see all those things I've put in your stockings, and don't you see

Santa faces the audience

that tree all loaded? Well, boys, I can't stop any longer. (*Shakes hands.*) I wish you a Merry Christmas (*turns toward the audience*), and I wish you *all* a Merry Christmas.

(*Curtain*)

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

CHARACTERS

Ephraim, a farmer. } Boys dressed as
Jabez, a neighbor of Ephraim's. } old men.

John, dressed as Washington — the tallest and oldest boy of a group of children.

Susy, a girl dressed as Martha Washington.

Polly, one of the smaller girls dressed as a little Eskimo.

Other Children { Dressed as a German. / Dressed as a Dude. / Dressed as an Indian. / Dressed as an Irishman. / Dressed as an Italian.

The only things bought for the occasion were the beards of the two old men. The rest of the material for costumes was hunted up in home closets and garrets. Often there was no very close resemblance attained to the characters represented, but there was always a sincere attempt to get a distinct individuality, and the result was in every instance satisfactorily entertaining. The scene was made to bear some resemblance to an old-time farmhouse kitchen, with an open fireplace and straight-backed chairs. This setting, even in its crudities, was much to the liking of

Going to the woods for the Christmas tree

the children who were the actors, and they went through the play effectively, where they would have failed, had it been something finer that was outside the range of their experience. The touch of the grotesque in the names and conversation and general get-up of the old men appealed strongly to the children's imaginations, as did also the masquerade costuming of the other characters.

Ephraim. (*Seated by his fireside reading a paper. Yawns.*) Oh hum! I'm gettin' sleepy so early. If the children wa'n't away, I'd wind the clock and go to bed. (*Slow, heavy footsteps are heard outside. Ephraim rises stiffly and stands expectant, while Jabez enters.*) What! that you, Jabez? Glad to see you. (*They shake hands, and Ephraim resumes his chair.*) Have a seat, Jabez, have a seat.

Jabez. Well, I will in a minute, when I get warmed up. Kind o' shivery out to-night. (*Takes off his hat and stands with his back to the fire.*) Where's Israel and Maria?

Ephraim. Oh, they packed up yesterday and went down to Boston to spend a week visitin' some of Maria's relatives that live there.

Jabez. Sho! they did, did they? Hadn't heard of it!

Ephraim. Yes, and they perposed that the children should go over to stay with their uncles and aunts at the Corners so I could go to Boston, too. But I told 'em

they wouldn't ketch me kitin' off so far at my age. Might get killed or something, you know.

Jabez. That's so! Don't take much to get killed nowadays. Keeps you pretty busy, I s'pose, lookin' after the children and all the housework and barnwork besides?

Ephraim. Well, the children are gettin' old enough to help more'n you'd think — John, especially. He's most as good as a man about the work outdoors. To-night they've all gone off somewhere.

Jabez. Didn't they tell you where they was goin'?

Ephraim. No. Said 'twas a secret. It's some school party, like enough. They hitched into the pung right after supper and off they went, the whole bilin' of 'em. I don't know as I ought to 'a' let little Jim and Polly go; but John promised faithful to see to 'em and get 'em home airly.

Jabez. Well, they all stopped over to our house. That's the way I happened to drop in. They kep' at me to step over here an' see you, sayin' you'd be lonesome and one thing and another, until I come.

Ephraim. Ha, ha! they're up to some rinktum or other, I'll be bound. But set down, Jabez.

Jabez. (*Seating himself and holding out his hands toward the blaze.*) Fire feels good a cold night like this.

Ephraim. So't does, and I guess I'd better be puttin' on another stick. There ain't many has these roarin'

open fires in these times. You ain't had nothin' over to your place but stoves these twenty years, have you?

Comfort by the open fire

Jabez. No, all our fireplaces was bricked up long ago. What's that? (*Straightens up, and looks toward the window.*) I thought I heard sleigh bells turnin' into the yard.

Ephraim. Sounds like the pung, but the children wouldn't be comin' back yet-awhile.

Jabez. I ain't dressed up for company!

Ephraim. I ain't neither, nor the house ain't! (*Both get up nervously. Outside there are cries of "Whoa, whoa!" followed by a stamping of feet and then a rap at*

the door.) Well, there they be, whoever 'tis! (*Steps toward the door, when a crowd of children in costume burst in.*)

John. (*Dressed as Washington.*) Wish you both a Merry Christmas!

Ephraim. Is that you, John? What you up to anyway? 'Tain't Christmas!

Children. Well, it's Washington's Birthday!

Ephraim. Is it? I declare, I believe it is. I'd forgot.

The children surprise their grandpas

Polly. (*Dressed as a little Eskimo.*) This is a s'prise party, Grandpa!

Jabez. (*Nudges Ephraim.*) She's a cute one.

John. Yes, that's what it is, and we dressed up to

represent a few characters for you. We tried to make some poetry to speak; but when it rhymed it wa'n't sense, and when it was sense it wa'n't poetry. So we give that up mostly, and we'll have to tell you straight out what we are. Now, I'm General Washington, the father of his country, first in peace, first in war, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.

Susy. And I'm Martha, his wife, mother of her country, second in peace, second in war, and second in the hearts of her countrymen. That's what John said.

Jabez. Well, I don't know but you be! I hadn't thought of that.

The German. I came from Germany to help make this great country.

The Irishman. I came from Ireland to help make this great country.

The Italian. And I came from Italy to help make this great country. (*Suspended from his shoulders he carries a box with a leg underneath, a cloth over the top, and a crank attached to make it look like a hand-organ. Turns the crank while some one behind the curtain plays "Yankee Doodle" on a comb or harmonica.*)

The Dude. Where I came from there's no one knows,
But I'm an American, I suppose.

(*After he speaks he marches across the stage and back, takes off his stovepipe hat and makes a low bow to the audience.*)

Polly. I'm a little Eskimo
From the land of cold and snow.

All the children. We all help make the nation,
And accept the invitation
Of this country good and free
A part of it to be.

Jabez. You done well, children, and your grandfathers are both proud of you, ain't we, Ephraim?

Ephraim. Sartain, sartain, we are that, and I'm goin' to skirmish around in the buttery and see if I can't find some refreshments. But first let's join in a hearty cheer for Washington and Liberty!

All. Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

(*Curtain*)

Companions